







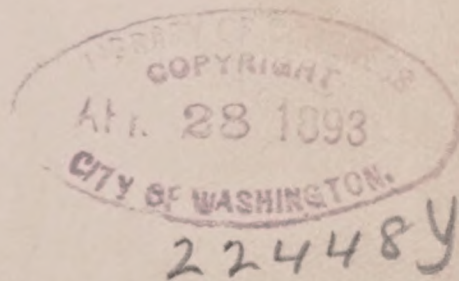
KENNETH JULIAN HEARD THEM. — P. 75.

THE
HOUSE ON THE BEACH

BY
JULIA MCNAIR WRIGHT

"Ask God for temperance."

—King Henry VIII



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PREFACE

Christian Men and Women:

What I have to say of this story is brief. It is true. There are terrible wrongs stalking abroad, wrongs to the home and to the heart; wrongs that sap the foundations of the state and bring shame upon the Church of God. Right these wrongs if you can, or, at least, right them as far as you can.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE HOUSE ON THE BEACH.

CHAPTER I.

A DISCOURSE ON WRECKS.

He hath lost the reins,
Is outlawed by himself ; all kinds of ill
Did with his liquor slide into himself. — *Herbert.*

FRAGMENTS of wrecks were scattered along the beach. Here, thrust deep into the sand, was a timber from the keel of some whaler that had once been famous in Arctic seas ; there, the centerboard of a catboat, once a fisher's pride ; driven hard among the rocks was the hull of a coasting schooner, which the tides had washed as it lay, for five years ; yonder, battered beyond repair, was the longboat torn by some storm from a passing brig ; there, barnacle-fretted and weed-festooned, were the ribs of a yacht swept from distant moorings. Among all these wrecks, the children of the summer guests and of the fisher folk shouted and played and

climbed, now enacting *Robinson Crusoe* or *Casabianca*, now having a romp of hide and seek, laughter echoing, fresh voices calling, mirthful eyes and dimples and golden locks gleaming in the sun, amid this jetsam of loss and terror and tempest.

All wrecks are saddening, but wrecks of homes and hearts and lives are sadder than the ruins wrought by sea and storm.

The house on the crest of the beach was a wreck also. It was a small house, unpainted and bare. Its windows shone dazzlingly clear; the stone doorstep was well swept; there were pots of mignonette and sweet alyssum in the windows, and the bees left for them the blue lupine and hazy purple lavender or sea-thrift at the sand line; around it swung yellow, white, and brown butterflies above the long coarse grasses. These grasses rose as high as the window sills, and, ever waving and rippling in the breeze from land or sea, sent out a low monotonous sighing, such as murmured day and night in Letty's heart.

The house was a wreck — the wreck of a once honorable and flourishing home. The three who lived in it were wrecks also, poor débris of a household once happy and prosperous. “Kemp's

house," people called it; and Kemp himself was the saddest wreck of all—a wreck of what had been a scholar and a gentleman, a husband, father, friend.

Yes; in spite of the butterflies and the bees about the flowers, in spite of the shining glass panes and the clean doorstone, and the gulls and the sandpipers that came familiarly at a call, this place was a wreck — no longer a home, but merely a place of shelter for certain who were despairing.

There are some wrecks to which the crews cling stanchly, and which stedfast hearts, firm to duty though bereft of hope, and stalwart arms knit to a final effort, still strive to bring into port, and this house was one of these. So much for wreckage.

It was June, and mid-morning. The air was warm and full of health and comfort as it came with the sunshine into the open doors and casements; the sea crimped and rippled in little glittering curves, looking so harmless and so fair as it kissed with satisfied murmurs the tawny sands! Letty sat by the window where the flowers bloomed. Her low chair was cushioned, and placed on a square of carpet; her workstand was draped with colored scrim like the curtains looped

back above the flowers. A little box neatly converted into a case, gay with olive-green felt and brass tacks, held her books. There was a soft crazy-work cushion at her feet. She had on her lap a light frame, across which was tightly drawn a breadth of linen, and her small supple fingers, working with the swift precision of machinery, were converting the linen into a very marvel of drawn work. Resting against the well-furnished worktable was another frame holding a square of plush, on which flamed golden-rod and cardinal flowers in a raised embroidery that would have filled with envy the hearts of Matilda of Flanders and her women, as they wrought the Bayeux tapestry. Standing upon the table was yet another frame, upon which was tacked black satin, having in progress in gold thread a stork on one leg, contemplative, among rushes, and a dragon fly.

Letty was wise: if it was her lot to sit from morning until night busy at costly embroidery for the delight of the wealthy, she gave her mind and her eyes the rest of change, and turned by times from drawn work to gold thread, and from gold thread to silk, chenille, and arrasene.

Letty worked in the sunshine, but she lived in

the shadow. There are shadows of the heart. In the air about her were mingled some of the sweetest sounds of nature : the breeze gently playing among the grasses ; the waves lapping sleepily the sand beach ; the low hum of bees continually busy and continually happy—for activity and happiness are nearly allied. Letty heard none of these sweet sounds. Not that she was deaf, but because they were drowned out by other sounds,—loud, rude, frantic, wretched,—that thundered not only upon her sensitive ears, but upon her yet more sensitive heart.

There was a door opposite Letty's chair, a door strong and well fastened, and it seemed that it needed both of these qualities if it were to resist the usage to which it was subjected. This door quivered and rattled on its hinges, and the strong fastenings of a bolt and two hooks danced and clicked in their places as heavy blows and kicks from within were delivered upon its unpainted sturdy oak panels. The door opened from, not into, the room where Letty sat, and she was in no-wise afraid of its giving way, but she kept lifting anxious gray eyes which would have been beautiful only for the supreme sorrow in them, and she cast troubled looks at the door from behind which,

accompanying the blows, came shouts, groans, moans, wails, expostulations.

“ Let me out, I say ! Is this the way to treat a gentleman and a scholar ? O Shakespeare, well did you write that it is sharper than a serpent’s tooth to have a thankless child ! Open this door and beg my pardon, wicked and ungrateful girl, before you bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave ! I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. *Open this door !* Am I your father, or am I not ? At this rate who would be a father ? Cruel child, do you not know that justice will overtake you, and you will not live out half your days in the land which the Lord has given thee — or any other land ? Be sure your sin will find you out ! Little fiend, sitting there triumphing in my miseries and your own wickedness, hideous little monster, let me out ! ”

At these words Letty began to cry. Not that they were new words ; she had often heard them, and she always cried. When one is crying one cannot do fine embroidery, so Letty laid down the drawn-thread work and rose. As she did so and came out of the shelter of her chair, it could be seen that Letty, with the face and head of a

grown person, had only the height of a child of twelve, and that while she had no hump, her spine was not normal. As she stood one might question whether Letty were a child or a woman — a child with a very old face or a woman with a very small frame. Her hands and feet suited the size of her frame ; her hair was remarkably heavy, of a burnished brown, wound in thick braids about her head ; her face well featured, with a smooth, clear, dark skin, seemed that of a person of middle age — a person who had known many sorrows. Letty was twenty-three.

When she had risen from her chair she walked over to a wall roll that hung above a small table, and reaching upon her tiptoes she closed her eyes, and, after a little hesitant straying of her fingers among the leaves, she turned them over, and then looked to see what verse she had found. This was Letty's fashion of *Sortes Virgilianæ*. She was sure of not finding any unhelpful word among her leaves, for they all bore some of the sweetest texts and promises of the sacred Word.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee.

This is a very good and comfortable book for them that mourn, surely. Letty wiped the lingering mist from her sad dark eyes and went back to her work. The uproar in the inner room had been in progress for over an hour, and Letty's courage had almost given way; but now the blows and protestations came less vigorously and there were lulls between.

When one of the silences had lasted for some minutes Letty began to sing. Her voice was a woman's, full, rich, sweet, and she sang:—

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord.”

In and out of the black satin went the needle and the gold thread, bestowing upon the meditative stork wings and tail that left nothing to be desired; and the sunshine flashed across the work, while the silence in the next room deepened and Letty's song rose to the accompaniments of breeze and bees and lapping summer waters.

When the silence in the other room had lasted for over an hour, Letty rose and quietly drew the bolt and undid the hooks, but without opening the door. Then she placed a chair by the little table and set on the table a tray with bread, but-

ter, cold meat, mustard, pickles, and cheese. Next she lit a little oil stove and prepared to make coffee. These cares being completed, she went back to her window and took up her drawn work.

The sun and the little clock on the wall united in declaring it to be high noon, when there was a shuffle and stir in the closed room, and then the door opened and a robust man of middle age came out. His steps were uncertain and slow; he had the air of a bad child who had been shut up for some unrepented misdemeanor. He sat down and looked darkly at Letty and the boiling teakettle. Letty in silence rose and made the coffee.

“I don’t see why,” the man began in a complaining, monotonous voice, “I don’t see why you use me so, Letty. Why do you lock the door of my room? Why is my room so bare and destitute and with nothing nice in it? Why is not Faith in the house? Faith is my handsome girl. Where is she? Why don’t she stay near her unhappy father? Why do you sit there and stitch, stitch, stitch, when you know I hate it? And it is not good for you, Letty; it keeps you from growing. Why am I come to this? Why is Ralph Kemp, the scholar and gentleman,

come down to this unseemly, poor little dwelling? Where is my son Hugh? Why did you send him away, Letty? You had no right — had you? — to send a son away without consulting his father. Where is he? Why is he not here to keep me company? Hugh was so witty, Letty — not dull and grave like you. Why is it that my witty child and my handsome child are never near me — only you, Letty, *only you?*”

Still keeping on with the drawn work, and holding over herself such iron self-control that no tears came and no quiver broke her voice, Letty, as her hand flew back and forth and her eyes were fastened on her work, replied:—

“Father, the door was locked so that you could do no damage to any one or to yourself when you did not know what you were doing. Your room we have to keep so bare and empty, you know, so that there will be nothing for you to break or harm yourself with when you are not yourself. Faith has gone down to the rocks with her work. You remember Faith cannot stay in the house when you *are so*. It makes Faith too nervous. I keep at my work because I must, you see, to get us food. We are very poor, father. Never mind me, dear, it will not hurt me; God sends me

enough strength each day for the day. Dear father, you are come to this; your fortunes are fallen and you have lost your place in this world because you cannot keep from drinking, my poor dear. It is that terrible drink that has brought you down, and you know how often you have said you would never touch it again. Hugh has gone, father. Yes; I sent him away. You know it was for the best. We could not keep a boy like Hugh where he had no friends, no chance to go to school, no one to help him along. He would have had only the rough 'longshoremen to go with here. He went to Uncle Wharton, you remember, and the promise was that he should stay with him until he is of age, and until then he is not to see us or even to write to us. That seems rather hard, father, but it was Uncle Wharton's way: he was so very angry at you, father. Our only hope for Hugh was to send him away. Don't you remember that you used to take him to saloons and where the people gamed and drank? We could not let Hugh grow up that way, father: he is a Kemp, you know. And, father, I stay with you always because I can take care of you, and I love you, my poor dear."

The unhappy Ralph Kemp looked up and

wincing a little at the pathos of these last words.

All these facts, often reiterated, had yet constantly to be repeated because they constantly slipped from Ralph Kemp's enfeebled brain, which kept but some dim and shifting shadow of them, at which by his questions he seemed to be clutching, and they must needs be set forth so he could grasp them and hold them in clearness once more. If Letty had been silent, over and over again in endless and miserable iteration his complaining voice would have pressed its questions and made its assertions. Only by clear answers could Letty purchase silence. Thus, as many times before, she gave these answers by which she purchased peace, although they were her father's arraignment at the bar of her conscience and of his — and no doubt were but feeble echoes of that weightier arraignment which should challenge his soul when naked from the body it stood before a more mighty tribunal than that of Rhadamanthus.

Having heard what Letty had to say, her father bowed his head sighing. Letty finished making the coffee, and then taking his hand led him to the little table. He ate slowly, seeming lost in

thought, and with his head bent sidewise mused between each mouthful. Finally the meal was finished and by means of sleep, food, and hot coffee sobriety had returned. Like Samson of old, waked out of sleep, the father went out to shake himself.

The cool, pure breeze, the fresh, clean face of nature called him to his better self and rebuked his degradation. With soberness had come those graspings at his former better self and estate which made Ralph Kemp's state profoundly pitiable. He shut himself in his room.

Letty meanwhile took her noonday lunch and set the little table in order for some one who failed to come, and her anxious gray eyes traversed the beach in vain for the tall figure of her beautiful sister Faith. She stood by the door looking out and giving a patient little sigh or two. It comforted her to look at that broad expanse of sea and remember that He holds that great ocean in the hollow of his hand. The strong One would not then faint or grow weary under those burdens which poor Letty hourly cast from her sinking heart upon his kind compassion—the father, Faith, the absent brother. How could she bear the burden of them all and solve the mysterious

problems of their lives? Through much need, through sore tribulations, this girl had learned to fly to her God with her daily cares. Where were these three whom she loved so well and for whom she could do so little? Nearer and dearer to God than to herself — of that she was certain, and her heart grew lighter at the thought. So, back to her work again, for there was no time for Letty to fold her hands. Perhaps it was well that there was not — she was happier so. Her life was a routine: not only the work but such incidents as these to-day were not exceptional, but part of the regular order of events, returning just about so often, and likely to return so as long as Letty and her father lived.

By-and-by the back room door opened and Ralph came out, clothed and in his right mind. Clean, shaven, well-brushed, his worn shoes blacked, his garments orderly, he looked even more of a wreck and ruin in this striving after respectability than when he let all the outer man fall to the level of the debased moral nature.

This was his hour of repentance. He always repented, and perhaps that was even harder for Letty than were his vituperations. He came to her and knelt down by her and clasped the small

busy hands and stopped them in their work and kissed them.

“My Letty! angel of a child! Just like your mother, always trying to save me from myself! What an unworthy father I am! How little I deserve your devotion! Forgive me, my poor injured child! You are dearer than Hugh or Faith; they abandon me; you never do. You ought to hate me! Poor little maid, checked and stunted and spoiled in your growth by my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault! Never mind it, Letty, when I accuse you and complain of you; it is not I that do it but the demon that rises in me. Don't grow weary and forsake me, Letty! If you do, what hope shall I have? for heaven and men alike despise me, and only you, my child, cling to me. If Calais was written on poor Mary Tudor's heart, Letty is written on mine. It is your name and your mother's, my poor little girl!”

CHAPTER II.

THE PRETTY SISTER'S ADVENTURE.

"O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee — devil." — *Othello*.

NOT a quarter of a mile beyond the little house on the beach, a bold shoulder of rock was thrust from the land into the sea. Ages of storms had here denuded the framework of the hill, and heaped along the shore and out into the water were the huge fragments of what had been a cliff, and these were mingled with bowlders of very different rock, which had been long ago, in the ice age, swept down upon these coasts and used, like the catapults and battering-rams of old, to destroy this cliff in some Atlantean strife.

The fallen and decaying monarchs of the forest come at last to be the shelters of wood mice, chipmunks, and squirrels, and other weak furry creatures; the fallen splendors of summer leafage heaped upon the ground offer retreats for innumerable beetles; in the walls of old castles whose barons were once the terror of a kingdom, the

small birds build their nests ; the face of the cliff is cut by the slow chisel of the rain and dew, and in the crevice the fern and columbine find foothold. So this cliff, which had fronted and defied the sea when the world was young, now broken and barnacle-fretted and weed-draped, had become a throne and a canopy of state to a young girl, dimpled and golden-haired and fair as May.

One waterworn and hollowed rock offered a commodious seat, the fine warm sand before it was a luxurious footstool, the great rocks above the seat afforded a resting place and a shelter from both wind and sun ; there was even a little flat ledge which held a basket, a book, and something done up in a white napkin.

The girl on her stone chair of state and comfortably resting back against the rock was busy making point lace. Her coarse blue flannel gown was perhaps shrunken from long use ; it failed to come down to two very pretty feet. She wore a round blue cotton hat with a stitched rim — a twenty-five-cent affair common at cheap stores at the seaside — and this, pushed well back on her head, which rested against the gray rock, surrounded her lovely Madonna face like an aureole. The girl's waving golden hair was gathered in a

loose knot lying low upon her neck, and her eyes, cast down upon the lace work, were shaded by long dark lashes.

This was Faith, Letty's sister, who had fled from the din and distraction of the little house on the beach. She had come here flushed, panting, excited, indignant, self-compassionate, stung with a bitter sense of degradation and anger. Years and repetitions had not taught her indifference or even patience with the troubles of her home. But now these distressful feelings had passed out of her face and the dimples had reasserted themselves, and through her mind drifted song. For had she not the warm wide air, the sunshine lying upon the sea, the sweet sounds of nature all about her? And had she not youth and beauty, and that perfect health which makes mere living luxury? All the blood pulsing in that well-molded, vigorous young frame was full of vital energy, and the soundness and strength of the body soothed and dispelled the disturbances of the mind. Moreover, when one is well and strong and full of hope one soon rises superior to the troubles of to-day — and Faith was just twenty-one. Looking at her there — tall, supple, fine — she seemed much better fitted than poor little

Letty to cope with the demons that had invaded her home. But physical strength is not always yoked with moral or spiritual strength, and in these lines Letty had vastly the advantage. In patience, self-sacrifice, humility, compassion, sympathy, Letty, who had always to contend with physical discomfort and an hourly sense of lack of beauty and vigor, far surpassed her lovely sister; and patience, self-sacrifice, humility, compassion, and sympathy are a mighty pentarchy in the soul. No doubt also there was a natural difference between the two. Letty from infancy had been one of those who live in the joys of others, and when she had assisted in making every one about her comfortable and happy she sat down and was content in their content.

So when the unhappy father had—as often happened—come home drunk, and Letty, to prevent evil consequences to others, had fastened him securely in his room, and next day the successions of fury, recrimination, penitence, and apology were to be gone through with, Letty remained at her self-appointed post, while Faith, as always, fled when the weather permitted.

She meant to stay away until peace was fully restored. She could do no good by remaining at

home; her indignation might break out against the disturber of the peace. Possibly she secretly felt that she was not treating her little sister quite fairly when she folded up that small lunch of bread and meat and, without stating her purpose, set off, intending to be gone for the day. Letty would not have opposed her plan strongly, but Faith did not like to meet the sad look of Letty's eyes or hear her patient sigh when she realized how intolerable to Faith the home miseries were becoming. It did not occur to her that Letty's eyes would be very sad and her heart very heavy looking for Faith when she did not come.

All the way to the rocks Faith had walked swiftly, with head thrown back, shoulders held well up, long, quick steps, her lips firm set and level glances of wrath flaming from her eyes. But the exercise and the pure air and the sunshine had done her good and called her thoughts away from her troubles; and as the lace slowly grew under her fingers, and she stole a look at her book now and again, life became not only endurable but enjoyable once more. She peeped into her book:—

“Oh, that the mist which veileth my To-come
Would so dissolve, and yield unto mine eyes
A worthy path! I'd count not wearisome
Long toil, nor enterprise.

Is there such path already made to fit
The measure of my foot? It shall atone
For much, if I at length may light on it
And know it for my own.”

“If only *doing, striving* would accomplish anything!” she said. “But how can any good ever come to me — to us? We are bound hand and foot by our father's sin. Dear little Letty! this other line seems always to fit her: —

‘And hopes that even in the dark will grow
(Like plants in dungeons reaching feelers out).’

But then Letty's hopes grow because they are set on heaven; here she only expects to endure. But I'm different from Letty; I want something for this world, and I expect that is right, too, for God made me in this world and has kept me here, and here is all the place I know anything about. Does n't the Bible say, ‘The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: . . . the living, the living, he shall praise thee’? I'm here, and I have to stay here, and whatever I do is to be done here. But what is the use of thinking of it? I am so tied down and hemmed in, I feel like

a captive in a dungeon, sure enough. Sometimes I get fairly wild for a little better chance — for something beyond earning bare bread and shoes and striving against waste and dissipation! Poor Letty! she would be frightened if she knew just how I feel!”

And here into Faith's dreamings and musings came a loud, shrill cry, as if from a child in trouble. Out of her rock covert came Faith and surveyed the beach. A few rods from her sat a little lad on the sand, his hat pushed back on his head, his hands clasping his bare feet, rocking to and fro and shrieking in pain and despair.

“Why, what's wrong here, my little man?” cried Faith, running to him.

At this apparition of a tall and beautiful damsel running to him, full of sympathy and with possibilities of help, the child lifted tear-filled blue eyes, wet, red face, and checking his shrieks into sobs gave answer:—

“Fishhooks!”

Sure enough; this lost infant was entangled in two or three fishing lines, much as Christian and Hopeful were bound in the nets of the Flatterer; moreover, one of these lines having trailed about him, he had trodden on a hook and it had entered

his foot, and while he danced about in the pain of this disaster he trod with the other foot on the hook of another line, and so here he sat wailing.

“Why, why!” cried Faith, going down on her knees beside him; “I never knew a little boy to catch such big fish, and I never knew a fish to make so much noise when caught! Don’t you know fishes are silent? They only make a noise when they are dead, and sputtering in a pan. Did you ever hear a fish sputter in a pan?”

“No-o-o-o,” mourned the little boy.

“See here, I’m going to get you out of all these troubles and make you as right as a trivet in no time, only you must not frighten me by crying. Try now if you cannot stop crying, and clear up your eyes and be cheerful and give me advice, and see that I do things about right. Come, come! you are a boy, and will grow into a man; you must be brave. Suppose by and by you become a soldier and are a great general like General Grant, and go into war, why, you may get wounded, and you will not want to cry then, surely! Keep quiet now. Did you ever learn for Sunday-school a text — ‘Let all things be done decently and in order’? That is a good text to help us in such a case as this. Here are three or

four fish lines and half a dozen hooks flying about, and you 'll be caught again if you don't look out. Here's one fast in your shirt already! The first thing to do is to have these lines and other hooks disposed of nicely. While I wind them up, you think how the fish must feel to have these barbed things put into their poor mouths."

Thus discoursing, Faith wound up line after line, having much ado to disentangle them and fasten securely the stray hooks. Next, with the points of the small sharp scissors that hung at her waist she cut the hook out of the shirt, and finally her small boy sat on the beach, dismal, with a hook in each foot.

Now Faith had time to perceive that this was not a fisherman's child, nor one accustomed to going barefooted. His plump pink feet and round legs had never been tanned and hardened by exposure to sun and wind. The shirt-waist she had been snipping was of fine cambric and city make, his silk tie had been knotted by careful, tasteful fingers, and these little knee breeches were of the finest cloth. Sure enough, there on the beach lay long black stockings and a pair of buttoned boots. This was one of the summer boarders' children, from the hotel half a mile away.

“Are you pretty brave?” asked Faith, “or are you accustomed to howl every time you are hurt?”

“I’m brave — when I have to be,” said the boy.

“That’s all right,” said Faith. “There is no need of being any braver than is necessary; we don’t want to throw away courage any more than we want to throw away cake. I don’t think it is a good plan to put on courage enough to meet a lion every time we see a kitten.”

The boy laughed.

“That’s right,” said Faith; “I want to see you in a cheerful frame of mind, so you will have courage while I get these hooks out of your feet. You see, I can’t pull them out, because they have barbs; I must cut them out; and so you will be just like a big boy, for every big boy I ever saw has had a fishhook cut out of his flesh some time or another. It is the fate of boys. Now don’t wince or jerk. I’ll do the best I can.”

With this preface Faith took out a very sharp little knife which she sometimes used about her lace work, and addressed herself to the task of cutting out the hooks; but she did not trust her boy in the matter of jerking. She took the unfortunate pink feet, first one and then the other,

prisoner between her knees, and held them vise-like until the deed was done. Her captive flung himself back and roared lustily for a minute or two, but was consoled by Faith's cry of "All right now; here are your hooks!" So he sat up and watched Faith wash his feet in sea water, which smarted a little, but would be very good for them, she assured him; and then she bound one foot up in his handkerchief and one in her own, and said that she would carry him to her seat among the rocks.

"We will play I am a mermaid, and that you are a little fairy prince come to visit me."

"I can never walk home," sighed the child.

"Oh, in a couple of hours I think you can put on your stockings and shoes, and get along very well. Perhaps some one will come to look for you, or I may see some one going along the beach who will carry you home."

"Perhaps Ken will stop for me," said the boy. "What is your name, Miss Mermaid?"

"Faith. What is yours, little prince?"

"Richard Parvin. If you are Faith, where are Hope and Charity? I always hear about those three abiding — somewhere."

"They are up at my house," said Faith, with a

remorseful twinge about Letty left alone; "they always abide there."

"Your house must be a pretty nice place, if you are always as funny as you are to-day," said Richard with conviction.

"Now I will make the prince a seaweed bed," said Faith, heaping up dry weed in a nook between two rocks; "and now that you are well settled for a visit, how will some lunch strike you?" and she laid out the napkin and placed upon it the bread and meat. These her guest, with the usual inconsequent haste of small boys, devoured at once. After that he did some thinking.

"Why don't you stop working and play in the sand?" said Faith's company. "I always play on the beach."

"I have to work. I can't afford to stop. I'm poor folks."

"You don't look poor-folksy."

"Thank you. Then I am not what I seem."

"Richard! Rich-ar-r-rd!" Loud shouts from some one.

"There's Ken!" said the small boy with some animosity, "and I've a mind to just let him holler 'n' holler, an' go clear home without me—an' he'd catch it from mamma."

“But in that case how would you get home yourself?”

“Well, p'r'aps you 'd better let him know where I am.”

“Here! here!” cried Faith, running out from her rock house to direct Richard's truant play-mate. And so calling, she ran almost against a tall bronzed young man of about six feet in height and broad in proportion, wearing a very stylish suit of seal-brown corduroy.

“Oh!” exclaimed Faith, stopping in vexation and confusion.

Off came the young man's hat. “My little cousin Richard said he would meet me by these rocks. I was calling him.”

“Here I am, Ken!” shouted the little lad, “in her rock house! She is a mermaid, and I'm a prince; we're playing it, Ken!”

“Delightful play! Let me join it. As I can't presume to be a prince, let me be the humblest of the Tritons,” said the stranger, turning in behind the sheltering rocks to find Richard lying at ease with bandaged feet.

Faith followed, angry to a degree. Her solitude was intruded upon, and she had forced herself upon the acquaintance of one of these summer

people! She was by nature a proud girl, and something ambitious; she had good blood in her veins, and suffered keenly from her fallen fortunes. The social disadvantage at which she found herself made her silent and resentful to golden youth of either sex. With the little lad she could be all playfulness, but now the mermaid taking her throne again looked rather a wrathful Juno.

“Fishhooks! The fishhooks in your feet!” cried Kenneth to Richard.

“Was it *you* gave that child those lines with all those hooks?” demanded Faith with superfluous indignation. “I should think you would have known better!”

“He wanted them,” said Kenneth, crestfallen before the irate beauty.

“Suppose he did want them! must people have whatever they want, whether it is well for them or not? We want plenty of things in this world which we cannot have. We begin by crying for a lighted candle; would you give a baby a candle?”

“I think I would, if it cried very hard for it.”

“Have you had everything you want, for instance?” said Faith, disgusted with this flippancy.

“Pretty nearly,” said the golden youth with

the cheerfulness of one to whom the world has been very good.

“Then when the time comes that you want something and can't have it, I'm afraid you'll behave very badly about it.”

“Indeed, I hope not,” said Kenneth, to whom this sharpness seemed very piquant and amusing, as unusual to his experience.

“You will,” said Faith positively. “Adversity is the nurse of noble souls; only your views about having every whim gratified are all wrong. No wonder you came near letting this child be lamed for life!”

“Say, Ken, I'm hungry,” said Richard, “and I've eaten up all her dinner. She gave it to me, and I ate it before I thought.”

“Oh, no!” cried Faith mendaciously. “That was only a little treat for stray boys who visit my cave.”

Perhaps Kenneth believed that. He unstrapped a flat basket from his shoulders and proceeded to lay out a collation, saying, “Here is also lunch for stray boys and girls. Let us make a treaty of peace and confirm it with bread and salt, and I'll promise to take Richard's education in hand and refuse him everything that he

wants, especially my fish lines and hooks. I let him take them to carry while I went back to the swamp to get a few specimens of insects for an old friend of mine who is a collector. You can see them while I spread out my collation."

If he expected to be revenged for Faith's tartness by seeing her jump in horror at "the bugs," he was disappointed. She examined them coolly, remarking, "I've found much handsomer plenty of times." She wanted to refuse to share the picnic, but somehow found herself eating it with the rest, and before it was over they were all telling riddles and making puns and quoting poetry in high good-fellowship.

"I wish you were at the hotel," cried Kenneth. "Where do you board?"

CHAPTER III.

SITTING ON THE SAND BY THE SEASHORE.

“Reputation, reputation, reputation! O, I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir, of myself, and what remains is bestial.”—*Othello*.

THAT “Where do you board?” coming at the end of their improvised and very jolly little picnic, recalled Faith to herself and her disasters. A shadow fell over her.

“Nowhere,” she responded. “I am not a summer visitor; I live here.”

“So! why, I didn’t know anybody lived here regularly.”

“I do; so you see you were mistaken.”

Kenneth was surprised at the statement and at the sudden change of manner. He had observed nothing unusual in this damsel’s dress; folks dressed as they chose at that sequestered beach. She was surely a lady; the delicate skin, the fine hands, the tones of her voice, her language, all indicated that. He looked at her puzzled.



“WHERE DO YOU BOARD?” — See P. 37.

Faith meanwhile picked up her lace and went to work with vigor. "I've been wasting my time," she said; "and if that little boy stays out late, he may get cold in his feet."

"Late!" said Kenneth. "Why, it is not three yet."

"It is quite time he was at home," said Faith, resolved to compensate for overgraciousness in the picnic by sharpness now.

"You'll have to carry me on your back, Ken," said Richard the spoiled. "Put my shoes and stockings in the lunch basket and strap it on my back, and then you carry me and we'll be three stories high, you and me and the basket."

Faith worked and vouchsafed no advice.

Kenneth made his preparations for departure. Pursuing his homeward way, trudging through the heavy sand with this Old Man of the Sea perched on his shoulders, Kenneth felt no inclination for conversation; but when Richard was finally handed over to his mother there was no need for questions. The youngster's loquacity broke out:—

"You ought to see her, mamma! She cut out the hooks just as good as Uncle Doctor! And she never minded my hollerin' one mite. She

made me laugh, too, she said such funny things. We played I was a prince and she was a mermaid and she gave me things to eat and a bed of seaweed, and shells to play with, and told me lots — 'bout things that live in the sea. She knows more 'n you do, mamma, 'bout some things. She's awful pretty, is n't she, Ken? And she lives here and she says she's poor folks, but you'll like her — I'm sure you will. She's very religious, and she's mentioned in the Bible."

"What!" cried Ken and Mrs. Parvin.

"She is!" insisted Richard, "in the verse I had las' Sunday: 'Now abideth these three: Faith, Hope, an' Charity.' She's Faith, — she said so, — an' I asked her 'bout the other two, Hope an' Charity, an' she said they lived up at her house *always*."

"Fortunate creature!" cried Kenneth.

"You'll go see her, mamma, with me?" urged Richard.

"Yes, indeed. She has put her handkerchief about your foot. When it comes from the wash we will take it back to her, and thank her for her goodness to my little boy."

Ken said nothing, but he meant to take back that shabby little kerchief himself.

Accordingly when the laundress had brought back her work, Kenneth assured his aunt that she was very unlikely to find Richard's mermaid on the beach; the way was long, the sand soft and very hard to walk in; he could take the handkerchief, and might perhaps see the young lady sometime.

His way of casual meeting was to go to the rocky bower several times, but he always found it empty. Finally, one evening, he was fortunate, but not at the rock house. It was a little farther down the beach, beyond the tongue of rocks, and she sat on a low pile of driftwood. Her hands were clasped in her lap, and she looked far away, Evangeline-like. She was but young, we know, and the present held little but trouble, and she lived on hopes. She was looking for her ships to sail out of far distant waters and bring her the good things of life. Letty, from her window in the house on the beach, also looked into the distance for joys that were to come, but Letty knew that her joys were not to be harvested in this world; she looked for them in a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.

The sea was brimming like an overfull cup. Against highest tide mark the lazy waves slowly

curled in semicircles of foam, and the light breeze carried their silver fringes up the tawny reach of sand. The setting sun gilded the little pools of tide water collected in hollows; great fishing shallops were hurrying home, looking like birds stooping low over the water, each one lifting a wide white wing.

Faith had been to the village. Her father, adept in bookkeeping, made up the books of some of the village merchants; the principal of the High School also sent him out Greek and Latin exercises and the seniors' essays to correct.

It was so unsafe for father to go to the village with its open grogshops that Faith usually went for the papers and returned them when finished. Using such precautions, father might remain in his right mind for some weeks and earn his share of the household expenses, while peace reigned in the little house on the beach. Faith was returning now with a parcel of books and papers. They were heavy, and she dropped them on the dry sand and sat on the driftwood to rest. Moreover, her keen eyes detected far out on the water a tiny boat with a triangular sail, weather-stained, but with a new white patch on the peak. She had sewed that patch in herself. That was their

little boat, The Goblin, and it boded no good that father appeared to have been looking after his lobster pots and to have been to the distant wharf. He was apt to be treated at the wharf. Faith sat down to wait for him, and there Kenneth found her. He made haste when he saw from afar the erect, graceful figure in the blue flannel gown, and the mass of golden hair under the round aureole-like rim of the blue hat.

“I have been looking for you,” said Kenneth, pulling off his cap and bowing as to a princess. “I wanted to give back your handkerchief which you tied on my little cousin’s foot. His mother thanks you so much for your kindness to him.”

“She is welcome,” said Faith, pocketing the kerchief with a little flush at its cheapness. Faith was sensitive.

“What a charming evening and scene!” said Kenneth, seating himself on the sand at a respectful distance from the driftwood. “My little cousin is very anxious to be allowed to come up here and renew his acquaintance with you, Miss — I — may I ask your name?”

“I should think you would know it without question,” said Faith. “Don’t you read your Shakespeare and the notes? ‘Green and yellow

Melancholy' sitting on the sand by the seashore. There is my name and description."

"Until now," said Kenneth boldly, "I never met Melancholy, and I did not know she would be so pleasing."

"You could not expect to have had all your experiences so early in life," said Faith, looking at him with an expression of severe middle age.

"People who live in New York," said Kenneth, "are generally accused of living so rapidly as to use up all that there is in life very soon."

"In New York?" said Faith with sudden interest—then checked herself. But that word New York had chained her. Possibly this young man might, if he rambled on freely in conversation, mention names that she wished to hear—her Uncle Wharton and her brother Hugh. Oh, what joy would flame in Letty's eyes if she could go back and say, "I met on the beach a young man from New York, and he has seen our Hugh. He says our brother is well and strong and handsome and happy and educated and good and free—free from the family curse!"

Faith was given to this sudden construction of castles out of a mere word. She forgot the package of books and papers, forgot the incoming

Goblin, forgot her dislike of golden youths ; she listened in silence while Kenneth talked his best. For his part, he was glad to talk without being rebuffed.

And really his talk was so fresh and entertaining, it gave glimpses into so much happier life than she had known, that Faith was beguiled and forgot the time and the place ; and now the little boat had drawn in by the tongue of rocks and its occupant was pulling down the sail. Kenneth took out his glass. "What's this? Little black craft with white line — The Goblin — eerie kind of name."

Faith was recalled to the present. What should she do or say to make this lad go away? Why had she allowed him to stay and talk to her? She could not speak or move ; the nightmare of her home had seized her.

"The good man had better look out for himself," said Kenneth ; "he has evidently been indulging in the inebriating cup.

'So Noah when he anchored safe on
The mountain's top, his lofty haven,
And all the passengers he bore
Were on the new world set ashore,
He made it next his chief design
To plant and propagate the wine,

Which since has overwhelmed and drowned
Far greater numbers on dry ground,
Of wretched mankind one by one
Than all the flood before had done.'"

"Butler — Satires," said Faith scornfully.

"What! you have read Butler?"

"Why should n't I?"

"Only that it is one of the old standard books that young ladies don't generally come across or take to."

"That was the kind of books we had when we had any; we have none now. That is my father down there."

Her cheeks burned crimson, her bosom rose in pride and pain.

Kenneth was confounded; oh, what had he said!

Faith sprang up. She forgot the parcel of books. Yes; that was her father with *The Goblin*, and evidently he had been drinking. A little liquor made him loquacious and self-asserting, full of vague memories of the past and rebellious against the present. She must hurry away; she could not face him and hear him before a stranger

"I must go home," she said excitedly.

"But where is your home?" asked Kenneth.

“Where I live,” said Faith blankly, with a level glance that rebuked his presumption.

But Kenneth had meant no presumption. He was vexed that he had directed attention to this unhappy father, and now he only wanted to say something that should cover up that hasty speech and make it seem that it was of no importance and had passed out of his mind.

Faith, however, turned and walked rapidly away.

Women, old and young, had always liked the genial, manly, courteous Kenneth, and he could not understand why he was failing so dreadfully with Richard’s mermaid. He had better stay where he was until she was out of sight, and not seem to spy upon or pursue her. Strange this, so ladylike and beautiful, knowing Shakespeare and Butler and what not, and claiming this man who with uncertain steps was coming along the ledge of rock, for her father. Ralph Kemp had seen Faith and Kenneth sitting on the beach.

Ralph was in just the condition when he talked most, lamenting over his past, and when he wished to impress upon all about him his original and proper position, and be judged by that and not by what he now was. Besides, here was a stranger

talking to his beautiful Faith. Parents should know the people who talked to their daughters. His beautiful Faith had no mother; her father was her only protector; so, uncertain and astray in mind as in steps, he turned toward the place where Kenneth was still sitting.

"I saw my daughter here. Has she gone?" he said, ruling himself with effort, and even the state he was in did not destroy the gentleman's mien and pure pronunciation.

"She has left a parcel here," said Kenneth, reaching for the books and papers.

Ralph Kemp sat down; he felt dizzy and queer standing. He took the parcel and looked at it bitterly. "Young man," he said severely, "I am fifty-eight years old. I have been one of the most distinguished students in my class at Yale." He undid the parcel. "To me Greek and Latin have been like a mother tongue. And here, in the prime of my life, I make a mere wretched pittance correcting these miserable schoolboy exercises and themes."

"Yes," said Kenneth, glancing at the papers held toward him; "but I don't know as I could correct that Greek and Latin with any precision, and I'm only two years out of college. But then

I fear I did not distinguish myself. I just kept along about in the middle of my class."

"It is terrible," said Ralph Kemp, "how young men neglect their opportunities. Young man, we shall be called to account for the use we make of our opportunities."

"A man of your abilities," said Kenneth with courtesy and deep commiseration, "ought to have a wider field for his talents than this."

"I had one," said Kemp sedately; "I had one, and I lost it."

"That was unfortunate."

"Unfortunate! It was criminal. Young man, we shall be held to account for the manner in which we throw away our advantages. When I consider my criminality in that regard I wonder if this sea is wide enough to wash my soul white. It is not. No floods suffice to wash out moral wrongs. Take warning by me. I have fallen by wine. If you were not a diligent student, you may not remember your Plautus: I will quote to you in English:—

There is great fault in wine:

A mighty wrestler it trips the feet."

"Now that you know what it does," said Kenneth, "why not rise up and get the better of it?"

Bowl the wine over and go on to what you used to be."

"That is impossible. The Portland vase was mended, but a wrecked character is another matter. I could not get back the opportunities, the high positions I once held, because now I have lost the better part of myself — reputation. You remember that Cassio says: 'Reputation, reputation, reputation! I have lost the immortal part, sir, of myself, and what remains is bestial.' No! I have fallen like Lucifer the son of the morning. I have been in Eden, the garden of God, and now I am cast out as 'an abominable branch.'"

"As you quote Scripture so well," said Kenneth simply, "perhaps you remember those other words, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'Cease to do evil; learn to do well.'"

"Repentance is hid from mine eyes," said Kemp. "The time is gone by. Do you know your Milton? What does the great archangel say? — 'To be weak is miserable.' I was weak — morally weak. What does De Quincey say? That 'the sight of a family ruin wrought by crime is more appalling than Babylon in ruins;

and not a day passes over our heads but some families are swallowed up in ruin themselves, or their course is turned out of the sunny beams into a dark wilderness.' So it is with me and mine. Once we were honored, happy, and prosperous; now we are cast like this wreck and pile of driftwood, a humiliated, despised family, sheltered in that little paintless cabin up there above the beach."

Kenneth had found out now where she lived! and he felt like a criminal receiving from her babbling parent the knowledge she had withheld from him. Here, overthrown by wine, was a mind that had shone with no little brilliancy. If the years had gone on in garnering rather than in wasting, what might not this man have been? And how acute must be the pain of that ruin, dimly seen and chargeable to self, as this fallen man lived contrasting the present with the past and setting what he had become over against what he might have been!

Perhaps some of these thoughts had been taking shape in Ralph Kemp's mind. "I might have served you and other young men like you, as a teacher," he said. "You might have hung on my instructions as the young men of Greece on the

words of Socrates and Plato. But now I serve only as a warning. Young man, be warned! I have a son — or, I had a son. He was taken from me for fear I should demoralize him. I was not considered safe even as a warning. It is a hard fate when a father is not a fit custodian for his child. He is in New York now, I suppose; Hugh Kemp, and he lives with his uncle, Tom Wharton, a man not half my equal in brains or acquirements — but also without my skill in self-destruction.

“If you see my son Hugh, tell him that a lighthouse is set up on the beach to keep ships away from itself, not to call them to it. I’m a lighthouse; I show him where not to come. Tell Tom Wharton I hate him.” Ralph Kemp was getting maudlin.

“Suppose I carry your books for you, and give you my arm for part of the way home?” suggested Kenneth. Not for anything would he go near the little house and further crush that proud young girl by his knowledge of her father’s state.

But as they walked along slowly, Ralph stopping at times to talk sense and nonsense, to quote Greek and Latin and English classics, there came down the beach a figure with the long dress of a woman and the height of a child, bareheaded, sad-eyed.

“Father, I have come to walk home with you.”

“Had I better carry the books a little farther?” asked Kenneth.

“No; he can take them, and if he puts them down, I can carry them; they are not too heavy,” said Letty.

There was such pathos in her face and tone that Kenneth cried impulsively:—

“Poor child! This is too hard for you!”

“I think not,” said Letty. “God never sends more than we can bear.”

“Is it right to charge such things to God?” asked Kenneth. “I think we are too ready to accuse God for what is human sin.”

“I don’t accuse God,” said Letty. “I only know that this has come into my life, and I did nothing to bring it in; but I find I have a duty to do, and I try to do it, and when it grows too hard for me, then it will end.”

“How will it end?” asked Kenneth.

“I do not know. God knows. He has his way marked out plainly, and all that I have to do is to go on, straight on —

‘Never heed, my little children! Christ is walking on before
To the pleasant land of heaven, where the sea shall be no more.’

It will all be ‘as a dream when one awaketh,’ and
‘as a watch in the night.’”

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING NOTHING.

"It has pleased the devil drunkenness to give place to the devil wrath: one imperfectness gives place to another to make me frankly despise myself." — *Othello*.

KENNETH went back to his hotel feeling as if he had fallen into the middle of a fairy story or some strange wonderland. What singular people were these—the beautiful girl, well-read, defiant, showing considerable tartness of temper and a mingling of pride, humiliation, and discontent; a man in cheap and worn clothing, evidently habitually a drunkard, with the tones and air of a gentleman, quoting the classics of three languages and aptly applying the English Bible; and finally, this dwarfed, plain sister of the beauty, this pathetic child-woman with the sweet voice and sorrowful eyes, a little saint set in one of the world's hard places.

All these must be worth the knowing, and to that grave courageous little maid he felt drawn in the strong bonds of Christian faith. Here

was his Father's child surely, finding her religion a daily stay in a thorny path. And to him the love of God had come as an added joy in an easy and joyous life, something into which he had grown with his daily growing, just as he had grown into man's estate, and which when it found speech was expressed simply and frankly as any other thing that was noble, good, and true.

He must tell his Aunt Parvin about this family; perhaps a woman's heart and head were needed there to help and sympathize.

Meantime, Letty took her charge home and, putting him into his room, said, "Now, dear, take a wash and lie down until we get supper ready, and then after you have had a cup of strong tea you will be able to begin on these books. It will never do to let all this work lie over, you know."

Then she went into the little back kitchen where Faith had lit a fire and was preparing the supper, albeit with some unnecessary noise and vehemence.

"Do you know, Faith," said Letty, "I found such a nice, handsome young gentleman helping our father home and carrying his parcel of books — a stranger."

"I wish he would attend to his own affairs,"

cried Faith, "and let our father alone! He was quite able to take care of himself and carry his own books."

"How did either of them come by the books, Faith? You had brought them — how did it happen? Here, let me stir up that corn bread. You sit down. You are tired: you have been all the way to town and that parcel was heavy."

"I suppose I left the books on the beach. I was tired and sat down to rest. Letty, we are nearly out of wood and there is a nice pile of driftwood down on the beach. It must be brought in after moonrise. If father can't get it, I must. I declare, it makes me so furious to go sneaking out to get driftwood, just as if we were doing something wrong, that I think sometimes that I will just go right out in the light of noonday and bring in my load as old Molly Pegg does."

"Father can get it," said Letty quietly; "and it is not shame as of wrongdoing, but the reticence of the sensitive poor that makes us go for it after sunset, when no one will see. Do not fret over it, Faith dear; we are not hurt by it, morally or physically. For my part, I am glad there is driftwood; if there were none, what should we do for fires? How nice and hot the oven is!

We have such a fine black bass here for supper. Kiah Kibble's little boy brought it over. They had been bottom fishing."

Faith looked moodily out of the window. "I don't see why father could n't have taken the lobsters to Kiah Kibble as usual, instead of going over to the wharf to sell them on that brig!" she burst forth. "He never gets as much for them there and he gets what he ought not to have."

"I know," said Letty patiently. "Father is not always easy to manage. I reminded him not to go to the wharf."

"Always! He is never easy to manage. For all the good it did I might have let him go over to the village for the books himself."

"Oh, no, dear! He would not have been back by now. We must not get discouraged; we must do our part, you know."

"I don't see how you stand it, Letty! For me, I feel sometimes as if I could n't and I would n't; and yet I have to. My could not and would not are like a little wild bird that beats itself to death against its cage."

Letty looked compassionately at her sister. Trouble is so much heavier when it is so rebelliously borne. "Dear, what has gone wrong with

you? What has happened?" she asked, still preparing her supper, while Faith, flushed and excited, sat by the window.

"I might as well tell you all about it. It is a mere nothing, but it stirs me all up and makes me so angry!" So she related her adventure with little Richard Parvin, and the picnic under the rocks, and all that had happened that day on the beach.

"I am sure," said Letty, "he looked as if he would be kind and respectful."

"Kind and respectful!" cried Faith; "that is just it. He treated me exactly as he would the young ladies of his acquaintance at the hotel or in the city—and—I am not like those young ladies. I have patches on my shoes and my dress is faded and I make lace for a little money; and I live in this cabin; and my father comes back drunk from emptying his lobster pots! Only for him, Letty,—if he had done right,—you and I would have been like the very best of the young ladies of this—person's—acquaintance—of as good family and position and education and dress and means. We might have been down there at the hotel, happy and at ease like the rest, and not up in this cabin, glad to cook for our supper Kiah

Kibble's bass. You, my poor Letty, would have been tall and straight and handsome. It is all his wrong and fault!"

"Our only help is in being patient and resting in God's will and doing our best," said Letty, setting the table. "And, as you say, Faith, we are not like the rest and it is well to keep away from them. We must do and be just what our dear mother would have wished, Faith; and if I were you, I would have nothing more to do with that young man, though he does seem to be kind and polite. You cannot meet him on equal terms, and so I would not see him at all."

"See him! have anything to do with him!" cried Faith angrily; "I hate the sight of him! My troubles and position make me so bitter, Letty, I hate all of them—all the comfortable, gay, well-to-do ones. I can't bear them to come here. They spoil the beach for me. They make the beautiful summer worse than winter. I don't know how you stand it all so meekly as you do, Letty."

"Faith dear," said Letty, "if I tried to carry my burden myself, it would crush me; but I have always been so weak and helpless, and since mother died, with no one in this world to rest

on, I have learned to take all to God. Oh, it is such a comfort as each new trouble rises to fly right with it to God; to feel that there is One who knows all and can do all, who hears my every word and feels for all my sorrow. Faith, it is just this way, as it was when I was a little child and had mother: when I was out playing or when I was studying, whatever it was, I felt that mother's care was over me; and no matter what happened — if I hurt myself or lost anything or felt sick or tired, or any one said an unkind word, or a little playmate injured me, or I had happiness, found something pretty, was given a flower or a treat — it was all the same: I ran with it right to mother. I knew I should be welcome. She was never too busy or too tired to attend to me. All my feelings of joy or of sorrow were reflected in her face. Her arms were always held out to me; she knew just what to say to me; she could put all that was wrong right, and when I was tired I feel asleep in her lap. And, Faith, now mother is gone, and the cares are heavier cares; and what should I do if I could not fly with them all, every one, to God and believe what he says? 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' "

"Letty, you dear little soul!" said Faith, bend-

ing down and clasping her little sister in her arms, "what an angel you are! How ashamed you make me of my fretfulness when I see your patience! Don't be quite so good, Letty. I am often afraid I shall see the wings growing that shall carry you away where nothing shall offend. And we need you here, Letty. What poor stuff my religion seems beside yours, you little saint!"

Letty smiled and patted Faith's cheek. She was accustomed to these variations in her beautiful sister's mood.

"Do sit down and rest a minute," said Faith, "and let me make the tea. The trouble is, I grow restive and miserable over this having nothing. I count up the *don't haves*, and the list is so long! And you have just as little; yes, you have less than I do, for I have health and strength, and you, instead of sitting and repining in the bleak region of having nothing, rise up into the higher region of possessing all things."

"We both of us have much if we count it up honestly," said Letty. "I have strong eyes — that is such a comfort — and I have you, my dear sweet Faith. What should I do without you? And you know we have both had a good education, and that is worth much; and you have not

only health and strength but beauty, Faith; and it is good to be beautiful."

"Sometimes I think it is a misfortune," said Faith. "I can't help feeling that I would *fit* in a much better place. I have the education and the taste and the appearance that belong to better things; and then I look forward through the long, long years of poverty and toil and hardship and discontent, and I see myself losing the youth and strength and beauty and hope that I have now, and I follow with my eyes old Molly Pegg in her scoop bonnet and rusty cloak, toiling down the beach with her driftwood fagot on her back, and I say: 'Faith Kemp! there goes the pattern of what you will be by and by!'"

"O Faith! Faith!" cried Letty. "Do you not see that half your troubles are of your own making, are purely imaginary, and are caused by bearing to-day all the weight of the years to come? The loss of youth and health and strength and beauty you bear as a present trouble, when it lies so far away. And how do you know but that when the years bring all that loss, they will have brought one by one the compensations that shall make the loss unfelt — home, friends, competence, occupation, useful position? How do you know, dear

Faith, what the good Lord has in store for you in this world? And whatever he has for us here, good or evil, as we may call it, we know and are sure that this world lasts for a very little while, and when we are done with it it will seem 'as a dream when one awaketh,' and 'as a watch in the night,' and no matter how little we have here, 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' We are sure of the crown of glory, the white robe, and the palm, Faith."

"You are sure of it," said Faith, kneeling by her sister and holding her fast, "because you daily grow in grace and have in your heart the earnest of the Spirit, and your afflictions are working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. But for me, I think my guardian angel must be saying, as One who spoke to Paul on the Damascus road: 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' But whatever you may say, Letty, I cannot help feeling that you do have more trials than you need or than are your proper share."

And as Faith said this she did not consider that hard as Letty's lot was and many as her troubles,

they were made heavier very often by Faith's own repinings and rebellions and murmurings. Letty had to be cheerful and courageous for both herself and Faith, and Faith added to the burdens which she deplored. Letty also did not think of this; she was not given to accusing other people.

For several days after, father kept at his work on the books and exercises and Letty wrought by the window and Faith in her rock boudoir made lace on the beach. Why should she refuse herself the health and comfort of the wide air, the sparkling waves, the fleeting ships, the birds wheeling overhead? These things were life to her, and were her only joy. Winters, when she must work within doors, were so long, and summers were so short! Why should she sit in the small room and be driven wild by the shirr of Letty's gold thread through the satin, or the scratch, scratch, scratch of father's pen and the sharp turning of the leaves of the ledgers? She meant to possess her rocky bower in defiance of intruders. If that young man from the hotel came, she would plainly ask him to keep away. But he did not come.

Father's work was finished and Faith must take it back. With days of abstinence sobriety had

fully returned, and father was enraged against himself, and for the time hated the demon whereby he fell, and wrote bitter things against himself. No one could accuse him more fiercely than he did himself. These days of depression and self-upbraiding were almost as painful to Letty as drunken days. Her father threatened suicide, declaring that the only kindness he could now do to his ruined house was to put himself out of a world where he played his part so poorly. Letty tried to divert him by keeping him busy and by making plans.

“You need a new winter suit, father. Try now to save up money to buy one. And you will like to buy Faith a new dress, I am sure you will. A green camel’s hair, a very dark green, will become her so well; and then you and she can go to church together. Suppose, father, that it should happen that you never drank another drop of strong drink. Suppose some sickening hate of it should come into you, and you were always sober. I know there are old friends who could find you a place in a Latin school, and we would go — somewhere — where the school is, and live in a dear little house, with books and pictures and a violin to play on; and by and by Faith would

marry a lawyer or a judge or the principal of the Latin school, and you and I would live on all our days together. You would like that, father?"

And father would listen, shaking and nodding his head.

Like it? Yes, very much. But what hope was there that the master-appetite should be mastered? None! none! none!

Thus Letty and the father talked, one day while Faith was carrying the books to town, to come back with others. As she came back, moving swiftly and gracefully where the sand was hard along the beach, Kenneth Julian, who was fishing in a creek running into a cranberry swamp, saw her, and straightway put up his rod. When a bee in flight sees a flower, to the flower it goes without afterthought or discussing why. Bees are made that way; and where elate youth sees other youth and beauty passing by, straightway like is soon drawn to like, as bee to bloom. So Kenneth soon overtook Faith and from behind addressed her with deference:—

“Miss Kemp, will you allow me to carry that parcel for you?”

So he knew her name. Faith paused; she wanted something to find fault with.

“I am not Miss Kemp; my sister is older than I.”

Kenneth bowed humbly.

“And I can carry the books. I like to carry parcels.”

“The beach,” quoth Kenneth, “is wide; do you find it needful to walk on it alone? If I am obliged to go to the hotel the other way, it will be two miles farther.”

Faith smiled a little.

“I have nothing to say about the beach; it is common to all,” she retorted, and moved on, holding her head high.

Kenneth also moved on, walking so near the water that he wet his feet.

“Your father tells me that you have in the city a brother, Hugh Kemp, with his uncle, Mr. Thomas Wharton. I could find him when I go back to New York. It might be very pleasant to him to meet some one who had seen his sisters.”

Faith turned toward him a flushed and wistful face.

“Could you give me the address?” suggested Kenneth.

“No; but uncle has a warehouse in the gutta-percha and India-rubber business.”

"I can easily find it by the directory."

"No, don't! Letty might not like it. Letty is so particular, and she promised — but I did not — I promised nothing."

Kenneth was silent. It might not be safe to question.

Faith looked at him anxiously.

"I should like so much to hear from my brother! We loved each other so dearly. We were always together; and I have not seen him or heard of him for six years."

"That is a beastly shame of him," declared Kenneth.

"No, no! It is not his fault. But what I should like to know is if in this time he has forgotten; if he thinks of us; if he cares for us still; if he means to come back. The way of it was this: our mother died six years ago, when Hugh was thirteen. Uncle Tom Wharton, our mother's brother, is rich. He is a bachelor. He was very angry with father — because of — his drinking, and he felt that that had made mother unhappy and had shortened her life. And when she died, he came and he had a great quarrel with father and offered to take us all three to live with him, only we must never have anything more to do

with father---unless he reformed. Letty was seventeen then, and she said she could not leave father; she had promised mother to do her best for him. And I said I could not leave poor little Letty alone. So Uncle Wharton was angry, and he said father was going to ruin Hugh, and we could give him Hugh. And we agreed, and Uncle Wharton said there must be no communication at all until Hugh was twenty-one, and able to choose as a man for himself. He said by then Hugh's tastes and habits would be fixed; until then not a word."

"I call it cruel, outrageous!" cried Kenneth.

"It seemed so to me. But perhaps it was better for Hugh. I think he will not forget, and in two years more we may see him again. Letty, for the sake of Hugh's good, accepted Uncle Tom's terms. I was angry and I did not say a word. We have never heard, not even if he is alive. I think Letty would be so glad to know that Hugh is strong and well and busy and happy and good. And Letty has so little comfort! And I should like to know if Hugh's heart is right and faithful to us; if he has never forgotten all we used to be to each other. I want to know if he loves me still."

“And you shall know it,” said Kenneth. “As soon as I go back to the city I will find him and will let you know.”

“Would you tell me the truth, the whole truth about him, good or bad, whether it would make me glad or sorry?” asked Faith.

“I would, honest; there’s my hand on it.”

So they shook hands and walked on side by side, and now Kenneth was carrying the books.

“Your Uncle Wharton must be a regular Turk,” said Kenneth.

“He was very angry, and he hates father and has no patience with him. When our mother married our father he was one of the handsomest, most accomplished men in all Boston, with the finest of prospects. Their life opened so well; and only think, in less than nineteen years all was ruined! You noticed my sister Letty? She is like an angel. No one knows as I do how good Letty is. You see she did not grow right? It was because father let her fall when he was playing with her when she was two years old. She was his pet. He tossed her up and failed to catch her, because he had been taking too much wine. He has never forgiven himself. I think it has helped to make him desperate — that and his loss of position and of his property and mother and

Hugh. But Letty never thinks of complaining or condemning. She forgives him all."

"She is a saint," said Kenneth heartily.

"We came here four years ago to hide from every one and try to keep father safer than in Boston, and we furnished that tiny house with a little money that was left. Letty does fine embroidery, and I make lace for some stores in the city. People who knew our mother give us that work. You see we are poor folks, very poor, and worse — we are disgraced."

"People can only be disgraced by their own acts," said Kenneth. "I talked with your father the other day and his learning made me ashamed of my own small acquisitions in my college course."

"Father is really a splendid scholar," said Faith with some pride.

She did not realize how freely she had been talking to this stranger. Those words about her brother had opened her heart and made them friends. But suddenly, as she neared home, she bethought herself.

"Give me the books," she said. "I wonder that I have talked so much to you. Letty and I make it a rule never to get acquainted with people. We feel that it is much better that we should not."

CHAPTER V.

KIAH KIBBLE, BOATBUILDER.

“Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood.”

— *As You Like It.*

WHAT place could be prettier than Kibble's Inlet? The clear water rising and falling with the tides, and seldom disturbed in its seclusion by the storms that tossed the sea, was bounded on the one hand by the low dark-green levels of the cranberry marshes set round with honeysuckle, smilax, and wild roses, iris, Saint John's-wort, arrow-plant, and golden-rod in their season; on the other side rose the sand dunes covered with long, waving grasses and candleberry bushes.

There on the sand beach, at the foot of the dune, the Kibbles, father and son, three generations, had built fishing boats and had their boathouse for a hundred years — quiet, honest, cheerful, healthy, industrious, unambitious, God-fearing men.

The boathouse had a little pier reaching into the inlet, and always beside the low brown build-

ing lay the big rounding hull of some boat, framed rather for steadiness and capacity than for speed. There were the great knees and timbers, the pale yellow heaps of shavings, the huge iron tar-kettle swinging over the low fire; and there were kegs of paint and big saws and planes and mallets; and there was Kiah Kibble himself, gray, weather-beaten, content, singing over his work.

Kiah Kibble was the last of his family of the Kibble name. His boys, he said, had been all girls, and they had none of them married boat-builders. And when at last his arm should grow too feeble to handle mallet or chisel, then the old boatshop must be closed, or fall to some one not of the family of Kibble.

Perhaps it was some secret feeling that the world could not go on as before when there should be no more Kibbles to build fishing boats that had impressed it upon Kiah's mind that the world was soon coming to an end. That by no means made him unhappy. The close of this present dispensation he felt sure would usher in a far better period, when "a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement" — a golden age, when all evil shall be done with, and all men shall know the Lord and love

well their neighbor, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

As Kiah pounded with his mallet, or wielded hammer or axe, he looked now and then across the sunny landscape and the shining sea, and thought how fresh and fair all would be when the world was restored to its primal bliss, when angels should pass through the flowery ways and commune with men, and universal peace and brotherhood and holiness should bless a ransomed race. Everywhere he searched nature and humanity and history for signs of the approach of the æon of his hope.

In his little home above the boatshop, Kiah Kibble lived with a deaf old dame who kept his home, and her grandson, a lad who ran his errands and was to learn the boat-building trade, if ever he succeeded in learning reading, writing, and arithmetic at the public school.

Kiah Kibble was the nearest neighbor of Ralph Kemp and his two daughters, and the only person with whom they had much acquaintance. The old man was rather well read and talked fluently. He was fond of singing quaint old songs, and he had a good violin which Ralph Kemp loved to play. Thus it happened that

when Kemp grew restless in his little house, and, as often happened, had nothing to do, the girls took their work and went with him to the boat-house, where, seated on a pile of shavings in the shadow of the eaves, they worked while Kiah talked or father played.

So it fell out one day, that while Kiah Kibble painted a nearly finished boat, Letty sat in the shade with her embroidery, and Faith with her lace making; Kiah's boy, rejoicing in vacation, was polishing with sandpaper the walnut about a porthole, and father, sitting on the worn, gnawed knee of a broken boat, played piece after piece on the violin, and the soft, sweet, human-like tones stole up the inlet and out upon the sea.

Kenneth Julian heard them. He had volunteered to go for cat-tails for his aunt, reckless of the fact that it was far too early in the season. Hearing the music, he strolled down toward the boathouse; he had been there before. Great was his joy when he saw the party assembled.

Deep was Letty's secret annoyance at seeing him arrive. It was just as Faith had said: she and Letty had made up their minds that it was much better that they should know no one of the summer visitors, and Letty did not want a

good rule broken in upon. But this was Kiah's place, and Kiah welcomed Kenneth; so did father. It would be churlish for Letty and Faith to go away, and father would complain greatly if they did; for once he seemed to be enjoying himself.

"Your violin called me," said Kenneth. "I always envy any one who can make a violin speak as you do. Surely you are not going to stop playing just as I come up."

"I will play again by and by," said Kemp. "Kiah is going to sing us a queer old fifteenth-century lyric which he knows, and the girls have promised then to give him his favorite song."

Faith bit her lip in vexation: she did not want to sing before this young man who was accustomed to well-trained voices. Faith undervalued her own sweet rich contralto, because it had not been tutored by learned masters.

Kiah Kibble, however, had no scruples about his own singing; he did not know when he flatted or wandered off his proper notes; he trolled out his staves roundly as he had been used to singing to wind and wave:—

"Saint Stephen was a clerk
In King Herod's hall,
And serv'd him in bread and cloth
As doth a king befall.

Stephen out of kitchen came
With boar's head in hand.
He saw a star both fair and bright,
Over Bethlehem stand.

He cast down the boar's head,
And went into the hall:
'I forsake thee, King Herod,
And thy works all!
There's a Child born in Bethlehem
Is better than we all.'

And so on, for ten verses, sung with unflinching vigor and enthusiasm.

When he had finished, Ralph Kemp began a dissertation on the troubadours and minnesingers of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, and the part they had had in the moral and religious education of the people.

Kenneth listened with frank admiration. This unfortunate man had gifts that would have made him an ornament to any college. Why was he not the honored occupant of some chair of literature, instead of a poor, lost, degraded castaway, almost as much of a wreck as the fragment of timber upon which he was seated? Why not?

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!

"Come, Miss Letty," said Kiah when father had concluded his disquisition, "you promised me

my favorite, you know. It adds a year to my life to hear you and your sister sing 'My Ain Coun-tree.' It seems to lift me right out of myself and my work here, into the heavenly country."

Well, if they were to sing, it was much better to do it without urging. So the sisters began. Sweetly rose the young voices — Letty's pure soprano and Faith's full contralto — and it was a song in which they always lost and forgot themselves in singing, for the beauty of it. Kiah's brush moved more and more slowly, and the lad's sandpaper ceased its grinding on the walnut wood as they sang: —

"My sins hae been mony, an' my sorrows hae been sair,
But there they'll never vex me, nor be remembered mair;
His bluid has made me white, his han' shall dry mine e'e,
When he brings me hame at last to mine ain countree.

Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I wad fain be ganging noo unto my Saviour's breast,
For he gathers in his bosom witless, worthless lambs like me,
An' carries them himsel' to his ain countree."

"There's nothing sweeter than that," said Kiah when the sisters ceased to sing, "is there, Mr. Julian? That's what does me good and makes labor seem light and earth time short. I'm old, and my hope for all that comfort lies up

above. But you, Mr. Julian, and this little lad and these ladies are young, and you'll see all this world made over into the fashion of our *ain countree*. It will not be many years now. All the signs of the times point to a speedy close of this dispensation and a restitution of all things."

"But what signs?" said Kenneth, anxious to draw the old man out. "Is it not true that since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning?"

"You are young, Mr. Julian, young — and the young do not observe closely," said the boat-builder. "The old age of the world has come. Even in my time I have seen the changes. Nature has grown feeble; the sun does n't shine as bright as once it shone; the spring comes later and is less lovely; the soil is no longer so rich; the fruits fail, the crops are slender; many kinds of animals and plants which I knew as a boy have perished. There used to grow cardinal flowers along that trench like a line of flame; they are gone. The beach used to be strewed with shells; there are almost none now. Once oysters and scallops were plenty here, and crabs too; you never find them here now. The fishers have to go much farther out to sea for fish nowadays.

Men are not as big and strong, not as energetic or long-lived; families used to be larger. All things now move toward the end — move fast; the bottom of the grade is nearly reached. Wars and famines and plagues and great crimes have been sent to judge and warn the world. A little while, and all this shall pass away, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Sometimes I dream that that time has come, and all the earth is at rest and breaks forth into singing. No houses are locked at night; no cry of violence is heard; no man preys on the soul of his neighbor; I hear people saying one to another, 'Come ye, let us go up to the house of the Lord our God,' and up and down the peaceful ways I see tall, fair angels, just like Miss Faith here, only that they have white wings and wear white robes."

Faith cast down her eyes, blushing crimson.

"He does not know," said Ralph Kemp to Kenneth, "that as long ago as before 260 A.D. Saint Cyprian saw just those signs of the end of the world, and proclaimed that the decrepitude of earth had come. These thoughts are original with Kibble, as far as he is concerned. He has not read the Fathers."

“Nor have I,” said Kenneth.

“When I was of your age I read them all,” said Ralph Kemp.

“Mr. Kibble must count it an added sign of the world’s decay that young men have so degenerated,” suggested Kenneth.

“If young men nowadays have learned how to withstand temptation, or if their friends and teachers have grown so wise and so forbearing that they do not press temptation upon them,” said Kemp, “then we will count it that the world has grown not worse but better, and that there is hope of happier things.”

Once more Kemp took up the violin, and now Kenneth made bold to move a little nearer to Faith and to talk to her in the pauses of the music.

Then when Ralph ceased playing Kenneth entertained them all; one while with college tales, in which Kemp delighted, and again with narratives of boating parties and picnics with those unused to such outings; and then with tales of Richard Parvin.

All this was so fresh, bright, lively, that Faith, busy at her lace, felt as if she had slipped into a new world. Letty sighed. This acquaintance was not advisable.

And somehow as they chatted, Kenneth learned from chance remarks the days when Faith went to town to take the parcels of embroidery and lace to express to Boston, and to bring back the plush, satin, gold thread, and other material that had come down for the work. Kenneth felt rising within him a great passion for pedestrian exercises, and a decided preference for that path that, winding along by the beach, led to the town.

At last the sun was low in the west, and the party at the boathouse broke up. Ralph Kemp took Letty's embroidery frame and led her by the arm, helping her along, as always when he was himself he tenderly helped this daughter whose life his sin had overshadowed. This left Kenneth to walk with Faith. Did Ralph purposely move slowly so that those other two could idle along chatting by the sea? All this worried and wearied Letty. She was pale and tired when they reached the little house, and Kenneth proceeded down the beach at a swinging pace.

"Letty dear, that boathouse is too far for you to go to," said Faith. "You look worn out. Sit right down here and rest, while I get supper. Father, don't let her take a stitch or move."

Letty leaned back in her chair and her father sat near her. Faith went into the kitchen.

“Letty,” said Kemp, “is n’t your sister twenty-one?”

“Yes, father; this May.”

“And she is a beautiful girl, Letty. I think I never noticed it so much as I did this afternoon. A little like her mother and a little like me. Your mother was beautiful, Letty, but not so tall and stately as Faith. That is a very fine fellow, that Julian. What do you think of him, Letty?”

“I have thought nothing about him, father,” said Letty, not quite truthfully; “he is a stranger, and we have nothing to do with strangers; it is not best.”

“And why is it not best, child? If we have come off here and buried ourselves like crabs in a sand heap, why should not you or Faith take such little opportunities of society and so on as come in your way?”

“There are many reasons why it is not best, father. We cannot meet people on equal terms. We are poor working girls.”

“Hush, child! That is an accusation against me that kills me. Yes; I have dragged you down. But still, it is not impossible for Faith to

rise. Did you notice how that young man admired her? He looked at her as if she were a queen or a goddess."

"I think not, father; only a poor girl in shabby clothes."

"I tell you, Letty, I cannot bear such words. And I know how he looked at her with respect and admiration, as at the most perfect creature he had ever seen. It reminded me of the lost years, Letty, when I met your mother. And why should not Faith meet this young man, any young man, on equal terms? You have both the manners you received from that true lady, your mother — she lived long enough to give you that; and you have good blood in your veins, the blood of refined, intelligent, Christian people. You are well educated too. Your mother saw to that, and I have not neglected you. Bad father as I am, I have passed many hours in educating you. You have read much, both of you, and good reading too, and there are no educators like good books. And, Letty, why should not this be, that, though I am fallen, my children should get back to their natural place in the world? It would be too cruel if a father's fall should shut the gate of hope forever on his children. I hate

Tom Wharton, but I believe that he will make a good man of Hugh, and a good business man, and will set him up well in the world. Hugh was always like his Uncle Tom—all for business, but not for letters. Hugh will be a well-to-do, respected man in his own home some day. That leaves you and Faith to be looked out for. Now why should not such a girl as Faith marry some rich young man like this Julian? Then she would have her proper place in the world. She would have a home fit for her. She would never forget you, Letty, and when I am gone, and no longer here to disgrace and trouble my poor children, then you can be fortunate and happy.”

Ralph Kemp was taking a tone very foreign to Letty's wishes. He was building air castles on very poor foundations, and Letty felt that it was a wrong to Faith to have her future thus discussed. And yet there was in what he said so much real fatherly love and anxiety for his children, so much self-effacement, that tears came into Letty's eyes.

“I wish you would not speak in this way, father,” she said. “You plan of what cannot possibly be, and I should hate to have you speak so before Faith. You know these summer people

come and go and at once forget all the acquaintances they make here. They have friends of their own class in the cities ; and even if a young stranger did admire our Faith, he would have his family to please and consider, and though we know how good and lovely Faith is, to others she would be only one of a wrecked family — a poor girl making lace for her bread. Please, father, put these notions out of your mind, and don't let Faith hear any of them."

But Ralph Kemp's mind had fallen from its early clearness. He was dogged and insistent. "I must do more for Faith," he said ; "she must have some new clothes ; she must not make lace all the time ; she must read. I will get some more books. I will write to some publisher for Greek or Latin proofs to correct, and take my pay in books. Why was I allowed to carry off the books ? That was your fault, Letty ; you should not have let me take them !"

But the kitchen door had been ajar and Faith had heard, and wrath and pain and mortification had risen beyond bounds. She came into the room and faced her father angrily.

"Her fault ! We should not have let you take them ! How could we help it ? You were

threatening us with a knife. We loved our books, but we did not want to be killed for them !”

“Killed ! knife ! Threatened you, my daughter !” cried Ralph with such a look of amazement, despair, unutterable anguish on his face that Letty, crying — “Faith ! how could you !” rushed to her father, clasped his neck and consoled him. “There, there, father, you never meant it ; you did not know what you were doing. Don’t feel it so, poor, poor, dear father !”

Faith’s short-lived passion fled ; she bent and clasped her father’s neck. “Never mind what I said. Don’t feel so, father.”

But Ralph Kemp’s gray head bent lower and lower, and his big frame shook with the sobbings of a strong man’s agony. Had he indeed come to that, to threaten the lives of his daughters ?

This fierce remorse is the heaviest scourge that justice wields.

CHAPTER VI.

“ I AM THE ELDEST, YOU KNOW.”

“ Learn temperance, friends, and hear without disdain
The praise of water: thus the Coan sage
Opined, and thus the learned of every school.”

FOR the hour, Ralph Kemp abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. He realized his iniquities as he had never before done, and he vowed in the most solemn manner that he would cast off his besetting sin, even if it cost him his life. His self-upbraidings and his protestations were terrible to hear. But sin indulged weakens both the physical and the spiritual nature; a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin is constantly lessened, and that true repentance toward God which grasps his grace for help becomes daily more foreign to the temper of the soul. Unstayed upon God, the steps that have habitually trodden the ways of evil are forever sliding.

It is one of the unhappy consequences of the fall of a man of Ralph Kemp's standing that the

door of hope is so far closed that it is almost impossible for such an one to regain a normal position. The day laborer, the man of rough, common work, can at almost any time find work and wages. If he is sober enough to do his day's task, his moral state does not detract from the value of his labor or lessen his opportunities of securing it. He goes to an accustomed toil, and activity diverts his thoughts, restores self-respect, and helps him in the conquest over temptation. But when the educated man, the professional man, has forfeited respect and confidence, lost friends and position, and been forced to abandon his natural avocation, when he endeavors to reform he finds himself hedged in from good on every side. He cannot reënter the line of life he has abandoned because for that the respect and confidence of the community were largely necessary. Bowed down by shame, he must sit with idle hands for the most part because there is so little that he can do, and what employment he finds is so uncongenial that it is not a pleasure but a pain ; not a distraction to the thoughts but a continuous reminder of a fall. Thus instead of the spring of a new hope he undergoes the reaction of despair. How easy it then is to fall back into the familiar

vice! How almost impossible to do other than fall! Restoration in such a case seems as much a miracle as the instance of him whose name was Legion and who dwelt among the tombs.

Thus it was with Ralph Kemp; when he had abstained from drink long enough to be free from its benumbing effects in body, mind, and soul, he felt, as never he had done before, the hopeless misery of his present condition.

“Will he hold out?” questioned Letty anxiously.

“No!” said Faith, with a clearer knowledge of the world and of human nature. “What is there to encourage him to hold out or even to make it possible?”

Letty watched her father with trembling sympathy. All her hopes and thoughts centered on those three — father, brother, sister.

To Faith life seemed to suggest wider horizons, and she recognized some interests beyond the little family circle. Somehow Kenneth had found out when she would be going to or from the town and he always managed to meet her on the road. He was so unobtrusive and deferential, so entertaining and alive with the stir of the wide life of the city, that he brought to Faith a new atmosphere, the enjoyment of which she could not deny herself.

Hitherto, Faith had had no comrades but her immediate family, and since the death of her mother and the departure of Hugh she had had no companionship beyond Letty and her father. Even before they moved to the house on the beach her father's sin seemed to have built a wall about herself and Letty and set them apart from other girls. The meagerness of their home life, the poverty of their clothing, the humiliation they constantly felt had debarred them from society and the little pleasures of childhood and early youth. And Faith had felt particularly alone because Letty's deformity had so served to sever her from all earthly pleasures and set her hopes entirely in the spiritual world that Faith's fantasies and imaginations, the poetry and books and daily amusements which she fancied would be so beautiful had no attractions for Letty, who lived only in duty done and longed only for peace.

It was no wonder then, that, after some withdrawals and strife with her pride and suspicion, Faith allowed herself to drift into a frank friendliness with Kenneth Julian. It was delightful to hear from him how things really went in the wide outer world; it was so comfortable to have the books of the day brought and loaned to her

in easy fashion ; to know what people were reading and what they were talking about, and to discuss these things with some one who was really interested in them.

Kenneth always had some good excuse for his appearance—he had gone over to get a book, but to-morrow he would be out fishing all day ; would Faith not have the first reading of the book? He could come up to the rocks for it the day after to-morrow. Or, his aunt had sent him over to the florist's for flowers ; he had bought twice as many as she needed ; someway the florist persuaded him into lavishness ; would not Faith take half to keep them from wilting? he believed they needed to be put into water at once. That Richard was such a spoiled monkey ! he had made him promise to bring him a box of bonbons. By mere accident Kenneth had bought three. Richard would die of surfeit at that rate. Faith must take one box to divide with Letty ; and it was such a pretty box—the very thing to keep her lace work in.

But Letty began to look with great uneasiness at Faith's return home with flowers, books, or bonbons.

“What can I do?” said Faith. “Why should

I not take a little pleasure when it comes in my way? My life is so dull and hard, Letty."

Letty thought that if she had opportunity she would be very sharp with Master Kenneth. But one day Kenneth put his jolly face in at the open door of the little house on the beach. "Is your sister away?"

"Yes; she is away and I'm glad of it," said Letty sharply.

"So am I," said Kenneth, seating himself on the doorstep. "I know how much you think of your sister by the way I think of mine. Her name is Patty; she is a dear girl. Here is her picture; will you look at it? I want you to help me give her a pleasure."

"She *is* a sweet-looking girl," said Letty. "What could I do for her?"

"I want you to make me a real splendid piece of embroidery to take to her when I go home. It shall be a screen, I think. You must choose the kind and the pattern. You have better taste than I. Please do not say you are too busy."

Letty could not say that, for in truth it was a time of very little work, and Letty had been wishing for more to do. As usual she had laid her need before God, and here was work offered. Was

this the way of answer to her prayer? To accept the work seemed the simple fashion of duty. So Letty said: "I can begin it at once."

"That is awfully good of you," said Kenneth.

And Letty thought it only fair to show him some patterns and materials, and give him a chance to exercise his own judgment.

At this point Ralph Kemp came in. Letty hastened to put all on a business footing. "Father, I am going to make a screen for Mr. Julian. It is an order."

"As my poor child is compelled by our misfortunes to do this work," said Ralph, "I suppose we must be thankful that she has it to do. But the days are not very far gone by when I would have thought it impossible that my daughters should know such necessity."

"Ours is peculiarly the country of abrupt vicissitudes of fortune," said Kenneth, who felt that a reply was expected.

"*Plena vita exemplorum est,*" said Kemp sententiously. "Ruin is at all times hard to endure, but ruin which is progeny of crime is hardest of all. My children owe me nothing but reproaches."

"Father!" said Letty, looking at him with entreating eyes.

"It is very warm to-day," said Kenneth, trying to create a diversion; "could you let me have a glass of water, Mr. Kemp?"

"With pleasure; and I wish, young man, that no one had ever offered me a more harmful refreshment, or that my hand had fallen withered when I held it out for a more dangerous luxury."

"Father is very low-spirited just now," explained Letty as Ralph went for the water.

"'Water the first of all things we do hold,' says Pindar, if you remember," remarked Kemp, returning with a glass of water; "and, my young friend, you cannot have forgotten the lines of Virgil, which have been so beautifully translated:

So water trembling in a polished vase
Reflects the beam that plays upon its face.
The sportive light, uncertain where it falls,
Now strikes the roof, now flashes on the walls.

"How well, my young friend, I have known the good, and how rashly I have followed the evil! As a consequence, I find myself unfit to live; too vile to look good men in the face."

"Don't, father!" cried poor Letty. "You make yourself out to be so very much worse than you are!"

“That would be impossible,” said her father. “There is no middle path, the Stoics say, between vice and virtue. Nothing is more honest than honesty; nothing more right than right.”

Kenneth saw that her father's remarks to him were making Letty miserable. Her father certainly was rather depressing company; besides, if Faith were not at home, she was at the rock house. Kenneth strolled off toward the rock house. Letty sighed.

“I shall be going home before a great while,” said Kenneth to Faith. “I have just persuaded your sister to embroider a screen for my sister Patty. I shall tell her all about you both and make her wild with envy that she does not know you. Patty, up in the mountains with Uncle Doctor, is not having half as good a time as I have at the beach. But Uncle Doctor Julian won't come to the sea, and Aunt Parvin won't go to the mountains, so Patty and I have to divide up our valuable company between them. As soon as I get back to the city I shall look up your brother, and I want you to tell me what I am to say to him. How much am I to tell him about you? I should hate to say more or less than you would wish.”

Of course it took all the rest of the morning

to plan what was to be said to Hugh, and when Faith went home and told Letty how they had been talking about the dear absent brother and planning to get news from him, how could Letty be other than glad about that ?

Master Richard Parvin did not find it difficult to persuade Kenneth to arrange for him a picnic of two up at the rock house, and to provide marvelous dainties for that occasion. Kenneth and a big hamper repaired direct to the rocks, but little Richard, crimson with heat and joy and tugging a basket, appeared on the threshold of the brown house, voluble, insistent.

"You *are* here, Miss Mermaid! It's a picnic, you know, just for us. Ken has gone on with the basket. He would bring some poetry books, but I *hope* you won't attend to them. Guess what's in this basket! You can't! It's just the goodest spread. Come on now, I've been waiting pretty near forever for this picnic, and I've said my prayers every night that there 'd be oyster patties and that it would n't rain."

Then, for Richard was a born gentleman, "Of course I want this little lady to come too," with a shy look at Letty.

"Letty!" cried Faith suddenly, "come, let us

go. Let us have one real bright, pleasant day! We never have any good times. Come."

"But father? I cannot leave him alone," said Letty.

"Bring him along," said Richard with heroism. "Is he any good at digging clams? Have you a shovel? Ken said we'd dig some clams at the inlet, and roast 'em and eat 'em out of oyster shells. It is such fun! You'll come, won't you? Where is your father?"

Letty considered that this excursion might tide over one day happily for father, and that if she refused the invitation for herself, Faith was equal to accepting it in her own behalf. She went to call her father, and Faith set off down toward the rock house with the jubilant Richard.

That was a glorious day. Father shone at his very best. Faith never remembered him to have been more entirely the gentleman, less obtrusively the scholar. He charmed Richard, and waited upon Letty with a courtesy beautiful to behold. Kenneth dug the clams; Richard washed them and collected driftwood for the fire. Faith, Kenneth, and Richard prepared first the dinner and then the supper, and when the west was crimson and gold, and long shadows slanted before them as

they went homeward over the sand, they said that it had been a gala day in their lives; and would they ever see its like again?

Father had been inspired to be his best that day because of the little romance he had woven about Faith and Kenneth. The idea that Faith might be rescued by a happy marriage from the miseries of their condition shed the first light that for years had fallen upon the unhappy man's pathway. The fatherhood that was still in him rose up to plan for the future of his child. "One rescued," he said to himself; "yes, two; for Wharton will see Hugh safe; and then, my poor little Letty, what will remain but for you, the guiltless, and me, the guilty, to perish together?"

As Master Richard Parvin's mamma was his dearest confidante, she was informed of all the glories of that clam picnic up the beach. Richard sat up in bed, his arms clasped about the fat knees drawn up under his nightgown, his sunburned countenance shining from a recent bath.

"You just should have been there, mamma; you missed the most fun! Her father is a really gentleman, all except his clothes, and her little sister—I can't tell if she's old or if she's young, but she is so nice! and the mermaid beats them

all! Ken thinks she does too. Ken likes her better than these ladies at the hotel!"

"What!" said Mrs. Parvin.

"Oh, he does! I've heard him tell you that some of 'em here bored him, and they didn't know how to talk; but the mermaid don't bore him. They laugh and say poetry and talk. You see, Ken need not have talked to her one mite to-day if it had bored him. He could have talked to the father, who knows Latin and such dull stuff, and I was willing to talk to the mermaid all the time. But Ken he had to keep talking to her, and he even tried to poke me off; he said, 'Richard, don't you want to go down there and sail scallop shells?' when I was the one that got up the picnic, mamma! I consider that very mean of Ken. If he wanted scallop shells sailed, why didn't he go sail 'em hisself?"

"All right, Richard," said Mrs. Parvin, promptly concluding that the walk up the beach was not too long or hard. "You and I will go and see your mermaid to-morrow, and we will not tell Kenneth, and then he cannot be in your way."

"Oh, you are so sweet, mamma! And say, the mermaid makes lace things a great deal nicer than your very bestest collar. Maybe you'll want

to have her make you something. The other one, the little one, is making a screen for Ken, and the shells on it looked just like live. It is a copy of seaweeds all hanging down, bladder weeds with poppers on 'em, and red and yellow shells, conchs, lying round on sand. Saw it at the little house on the beach, mamma."

Mrs. Parvin made her preparations for a long walk up the beach, and concluded within herself that young men were just as much trouble to look after as young women.

Only Letty was at home next day when Richard escorted his mamma to the house on the beach. Father, restless, had concluded to go to look after his lobster pots and do some bottom fishing, and as Faith was all out of work, she went with him to assure his return home without going to the wharf.

"Here 's Ken's screen, mamma, for Patty," said Richard, doing the honors.

"I was very glad to get the order. This is slack time in fancywork, just now," said poor Letty.

"Why, did you design that? That is beautiful! What a wonderful little spider crab this is peeping out from the weeds! You should have been an artist!" cried Mrs. Parvin to Letty.

“Faith brings me my patterns — seaweeds, flowers, shells, crabs, beetles, all sorts of natural things; so it is easy to put them together,” said Letty. “But I have often thought that if things had gone well with us, I should have liked to learn to paint. That would have been better than anything else.”

“You look very cozy here,” said Mrs. Parvin; “that is a real little boudoir by your window.”

“Faith did all that,” said Letty. “Faith is so good to me.”

And then from word to word these two, the easy, handsome woman from the city, happy, fortunate wife and mother, and the little dwarfed worker by the seaside, slipped into closer and closer confidence as they talked, finding their hearts near akin, the one being lonely and anxious and longing for a friend; the other motherly and sympathetic, and both having kinship through the household of faith. Why, Letty even told how funds had grown low and work had failed, and she had prayed for more, and how she wondered if she had done right to take this that Kenneth had offered. It had seemed to her, Letty said, that she and Faith were set apart and not like other girls, for they belonged not to the

people among whom their lot had been cast, and were exiled from the life where, once they had belonged; and was she not right in thinking that it was better that they should keep to themselves and not make acquaintances, or stir up discontent or longings for happier things that could not be?

Mrs. Parvin found Letty right in this.

Then Faith's work was shown, and Mrs. Parvin ordered several pieces at better prices than the stores offered.

"And you must think it is really all right to take this work. I am not a flattering young man, and I think God really sent me here to see you," said Mrs. Parvin.

But Faith, when she came home and heard of the visit from Letty, flushed and frowned and seemed reluctant to take this work, although she felt compelled to do so.

There was a large piece of timber buried in the sand near the house; the moon was at full, making a path of splendor over the sea. Faith and Kenneth sat on that timber talking, as the evening wore away. They were a stone's cast from Letty sitting in her window and father on the doorstep.

"It is all right," said father; "it is better so."

But Letty shook her head. She could not believe that. And when they were alone she took Faith's hand:—

“Dear Faith, you are only going to make yourself sad and discontented. This is not well. We were right when we said we would make no friends among these summer guests. We are not of their kind. You will listen to me, Faith, and give this acquaintance up? I know what is best for you; I am the eldest, you know.”

Faith was vexed; but there was pathos as well as whimsicality in that plea of seniority made by this poor little sister, and the tall, handsome Faith bent down and hugged her to her heart.

CHAPTER VII.

FAREWELL ! FAREWELL !

“ Reach with your whiter hands to me
Some crystal of the spring,
And I about the cup shall see
White lilies blossoming.”

RALPH KEMP had now abstained from strong drink for a longer period than ever before in Letty's recollection, and for the first time hope of his permanent reform entered into her heart. Heretofore he had mourned much that he had fallen, but had never seemed to make effort toward restoration; he had been like Ephraim, thoroughly joined to his idols.

Faith had no share in Letty's new hopes; her keener eyes detected already the symptoms of relapse—the moodiness and restlessness, the inertia. She expected every hour that he would disappear to the town and be gone for several days.

She understood the reason of his recent abstinence; he had not been willing that Kenneth

Julian should see him intoxicated. She knew that his self-restraint had been for her sake; and she felt a certain gratitude that he cared enough for her to use even that much denial for her; and she gave a bitter smile when she reflected how idle and ridiculous were the plans of her father in her behalf. Poor father! to base his dreams on a slight acquaintance with the guest of a summer, who in a few days would be gone forever and forget even their names!

Faith was not indulging in any foolish and baseless ideas, but there was something pathetic even in the absurdity of her father's schemes. And now the summer waned and the first day of autumn had come, and soon the beach would be left to the few who lived near it the year round.

"I hate to leave this place," said Kenneth, sitting on Faith's rocks and skipping little pebbles out over the water, as the tide was high and the sea calm. "I think this is one of the most restful and serenely beautiful places I ever saw. It just suits you, Miss Faith."

"That shows how very little you know about me," said Faith. "I am not restful or serene, and as for this place, it does not suit me at all;

I hate it. It seems all very well for the bright warm summer days, but consider what it is in the long, cold desolation of the winter. Not a person in sight except ourselves, scarcely a bird even alive upon the beach; no variety, no interests, nothing but stitch, stitch, stitch, Letty in her window and I in mine."

"I can understand that that must be terrible," said Kenneth. "Was it wise for you to come and bury yourselves in this out-of-the-way place?"

"It was all that we could do. We could not pay the rents or get the clothing fit for the city. We realized that what few old friends were left were tired of seeing us there. For ourselves, we could not endure to have our father disordered and intoxicated upon the streets before those who had known him as a man of large attainments and promise. We could do nothing with our terrible shame but come here and bury it. Oh, just as you cannot guess how bitter the winters are here in the cheerless silence, so you cannot guess how terrible is the lot of a drunkard's family."

Faith's eyes were full of tears, her lips trembled, her hands lay idle in her lap, holding the dainty work which she could not see to continue.

“Miss Faith,” said Kenneth gently, “I know this is very terrible, very hard for you to bear, but yours is not the only story of this kind. How many other families are bearing the same burden! How often it happens that the men that fall into this sin are the brightest, most generous, genial, lovable natures! Their very virtues have betrayed them. Such men and their families have the warmest sympathies of those who know them. The burden of the sorrow of it is very great, but do you not exaggerate the burden of the disgrace? Perhaps it was not well for you to sacrifice yourself for the sake of trying to hide your father.”

“As things were, it was just as dreadful to be in the city as it is to be here. But here I feel narrowed and imprisoned, chained! I feel as if I vegetate, as if my mind dwarfs and warps daily!”

“Why do you stay?” said Kenneth. “In the city you could find more congenial ways of making money than you have here. You might be a governess, you get on so well with children. Richard cannot find words enough to praise you. If you were with nice people who would be good to you, you could have all the advantages of the city — the lectures, concerts, churches, libraries; and you could help your sister also.”

“But I could not leave her alone!” cried Faith. “Do you suppose I could ever go away, even for twenty-four hours, and leave poor little Letty here? She has enough to bear in this world without my desertion. And Letty would not leave father, and I would not; after all he is our father and we have our duty towards him to do; and I don’t believe happiness could ever come in shirking duty.”

“You are right,” said Kenneth. “If Letty must stay here, I don’t see how you could leave her. But if it is your lot to stay here, Miss Faith, I think you must brace up and make the best you can out of it.”

“I don’t see what that best is,” said Faith. “More lace? I fill all my orders;” and she picked up her work again.

“Perhaps you make too much lace. Man doth not live by bread alone. Perhaps in this treadmill life you are neglecting some ways in which you could help and encourage yourself. Give yourself more time for reading. I have heard you say you used to be fond of French. Take it up again, and get interested in it. My sister and I read French together. We have plenty of books, and after we read them once or twice they are not

read again. We can send you all you want of them."

"I don't want any of them," said Faith, "thank you. If I want any books, my father can get Greek proof-reading to do, and take his pay in books. He said he could, and would."

"By all means have him do it, then," said Kenneth. "Brush up your French, try Italian, give yourself fresh intellectual outlook. It will occupy your mind and keep you from brooding. Besides, the day may come when you will need to use all the mental training you have. If anything should happen to your father, you could take your sister to the city and take care of her. And do you really get nowhere and see nobody all winter?"

"Nowhere; hardly even to church. The nearest church is three miles off. Roads and weather need to be good for one to take that walk, and I must go alone; Letty cannot walk so far, and father will not go. We are off any carriage road, and no one comes out here. We invite nobody, and want nobody. Winter before last the minister came out once. Last year they had no minister at the church, only supplies. Last winter Kiah Kibble was the only person who entered our house, except Luke Folsom, to see father about lobsters

once or twice. I wonder we do not get so stupid and awkward, Letty and I, that we do not know how to behave before people when we do see them !”

Kenneth laughed. “Awkwardness was not born in you. But this winter, when Patty and I are enjoying anything, I shall think of you and wish you could share it. But keep your courage up ; I don’t think you are one of the world’s disinherited ones : some good will open for you by and by. Only you know you can break down health and spirits by allowing yourself to brood and be discouraged. You must get books and read them to yourself and aloud, and you and Letty must sing. Perhaps the reading and singing will be a help to your father. Once I set myself as a task to see what God did to train his great workers and servants, and I found one of his chief expedients was to send them into the desert. Did you ever notice that ? Moses went into the lonely desert of Midian and kept sheep there for forty years, almost a lifetime of our modern fashions. Elijah apparently was for many years a lonely recluse, waiting until God had his work ready for him. David kept sheep on the Judæan hills, and learned to govern the people by guiding

and guarding his flock. Daniel was put to school in Babylon; John the Baptist tarried in the desert until his manhood came; our Lord himself grew up in the silence and obscurity of a village carpenter's shop. I think it is not where we are or how we are situated that need make the difference: it is the using well the place where God puts us."

"And could you have put all this sound philosophy in practice if your lot had been a hard one?" said Faith. "Your life has been very easy."

"I know it has: and of course I cannot tell what I should do if I were tried. I might fail just where I should be strong. But the theory is a good one, no matter what my practice might be."

It was surely pleasanter to sit out here on the rocks and talk with Kenneth as she worked than to be alone there all day making her lace or to sit by Letty in the little house on the beach. She and Letty seemed to have so little to talk about, their lives were so narrow, and they grew silent in the miserable routine. A chat with Kenneth or a visit from the lively Richard had been something to look forward to.

And now Richard had come up to say good-by and to protest that he hated to go, and the

beach was twice as nice as the city, and he had never seen any one half as nice as his mermaid. He could not even say if he would be back next summer: mamma did n't know. Would his dear mermaid come and visit him in the city for Christmas?

"No, indeed," said Faith; "what would Letty do then? You must keep Christmas without me."

"Patty is very nice," said Richard, "but she does n't come up with you. She does n't understand fishing or crabs."

And then Kenneth had come up to say good-by and had left with father an armful of books, and had shaken hands and wished them well and was gone.

"When is he coming back?" asked father.

"Never, I suppose," said Faith. "People tire of out-of-the-way places like this in a summer and go somewhere else. Only those stay that must."

"And you and Letty stay here because of me," said father. "I should have built up your fortunes, but I have pulled them down."

"We are all right and happy," said Letty heartily, "so long as you are good. You will not touch that terrible poison again now, will you?"

"It is idle, child, to count on me. Do you know

how weak I am? Do you know what this craving thirst is? I withstand more temptation in a week than you and Faith will need to in your whole lives."

"Yes, father; but God is able to supply all your need; he will make you strong. Father, it is but holding firm hour by hour. Ask God to keep you this hour, and when that is over, for the next and the next, and so hour by hour, for all the time."

"What a life!" cried Ralph. "What a martyrdom! Hanging over the edge of a precipice, and the only hope or prospect just to hold firm, minute by minute more! What is such a life worth?"

"And how much is our life worth here?" said Faith wearily. The bitterness about her father's case was that he did not want to try. "I wish," said Faith, "that Kiah Kibble's prophecies would come true now at once, and the world be all made over. In a reign of righteousness, a new world, with no poison made or sold, you and a great many more would be safe and happy. All the opportunities of the world for good would be open to you, and none for evil."

"You do not seem to consider that some of us

would not fit a regenerated world any more than we should fit heaven. There would be nothing in common between us and it. I look back to days when I devoted myself to study and the duties of my classroom. All my interests and acquaintances were with literature and literary people. I enjoyed them then, but now I cannot see why or how I did. I have lost mental spring; the desire, the possibility of the former life are gone. Oh! I've had people talk to me and argue with me; the old friends used to do it. They applied logic to allay a raving thirst! They said I could, and I should; that to choose the base was unworthy, when the high and noble might rather be chosen. The temperance people now come to you and tell you how bad your state is. Don't you know it better than they can tell it? How dangerous, how wicked, how miserable! Yes; that is all well known. They tell you what you must do to reform; they ignore the fact that you have destroyed in yourself the possibility of preference for reform. And when you can't and won't follow their advice, as says Cicero in *De Officiis*, 'folding up the rays of their illumination, as one folds up a fan, they dedicate you to the demon, and abandon you to night.' And that is

where I belong, I suppose — too weak to be good, and too wicked to want to be good.”

Faith was looking out over the sea in an apathy of gloom. If these were father's views, what was the prospect but to sink lower and lower with each passing year? Why strive? why not just drift?

Poor Letty was crying. She did not want to cry; when father was in one of these moods her tears angered him. He caught up his hat and went off with long steps, his head held down, a certain dogged determination for evil in his face.

Letty and Faith looked at each other.

“O Letty!” cried Faith, “why, why, why, why have we this hard lot?”

“‘What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter,’” said Letty. “The time will come, Faith dear, when we shall see the why and the need-be of it all.”

“You might make me feel that about sorrows, but not about sins,” said Faith. “I know ‘God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.’ Father's way is not God's way.”

“But, Faith, we did not have the control of father's life; we did not choose our father. Here we are; we had nothing to do with it. For us it

is sorrow and not sin, and all there is for us to do is just to trust God, and follow the way of duty step by step."

She was silent for a while, her face resting on her hand. Faith knew that she was praying. Then with a calm look she took up her work again. She had left all in her heavenly Father's keeping.

"It is all well enough for Letty to wait," said Faith. "She cannot do anything else, poor little soul! But I am strong; I can act." Then aloud: "I will go after father, Letty, and help him against himself. I can overtake him; I walk faster than he does."

"He may be angry and — cross to you," faltered Letty.

"No, he won't; he is sober still. And anyway he would not dare."

So Faith went out after her father. When she reached the ledge of rocks he was not to be seen along the beach. Where was he? She wondered that he had gone so fast as to be out of sight. Presently, as she looked here and there, she saw a figure rising from the long grass along a low ravine and moving toward a wooded hollow, half a mile away. It was father. Not on the road to

town! What was he doing there? Faith pursued the way he had taken, going swiftly to come up with him, and at last entered the woods.

It was very peaceful in there. The warm sun of September brought out the spicy odors of sweet fern, candleberry, fir, juniper, and pine. The shadows overhead were flecked with sunlight; beneath, the tawny pine-needles carpeted the ground, and here and there aster or golden-rod lit the lower shadows as with a star. The birds were busy there; the jays chattered, the catbird called, here perched a robin in his red vest, there a woodpecker in red, white, and black whirled about a tree. Up and down the trunks red squirrels or striped chipmunks ran. Faith dearly loved this wood. There was a hollow in it—a moss-lined spot—where a delicious spring bubbled up clear and cold. She seldom had time to come here and enjoy these beauties, and then she must have come alone, as Letty could not have walked so far, and walking alone in the woods was not so pleasant.

But where was her father? She could see nothing of him. She held her way to the spring. There he sat on the ground, his back toward her, bent a little forward. Suddenly a fear seized

her. What was he doing there? Something was wrong. She spoke out loudly:—

“Father!”

He started, turned—his left arm was laid bare, and as he turned Faith saw a wound and a red stream. She sprang forward and dropping on her knees cried:—

“Father! father! what is this?”

“At last I have found courage to die,” said he. “So the old Stoics died; so Seneca died, having opened his veins.”

Meanwhile Faith had found her handkerchief and had pulled from her neck a narrow black ribbon. She bound the ribbon tightly about his arm, twisted it closer by means of a little twig, scooped from the spring her hat full of water and poured it on the cut arm. “You have not cut an artery,” she said. “This is not serious. Here, let me bandage it with my handkerchief. O father! father! what has possessed you to do such a wicked deed?”

“Why did you come, Faith? If your voice had not startled me, I should have reached the artery, and in a little time all would have been over in a painless death.”

“In a terrible and shameful sin, father, for

which there would be no time for repentance. Could you go before God with self-murder on your soul? Oh, why, why did you try this?"

"I cannot hold it sin to take my life," said Ralph. "It came to me without my consent; it is my heavy burden; it is a hindrance and an injury to you and Letty. I could not find courage to live. My life is miserable, and I have a right to divest myself of it; it is my own."

"This is cowardice," said Faith. "You admit that yourself, father. And your own Stoics can tell you better things. Have they not written that man is God's soldier, placed by him at the post of duty, and he has no right to lay down his arms or vacate his post, except when God gives the word? Stand on guard, father, you must, until the Captain relieves you. Any soldier knows that."

"Down yonder in the grass," said Ralph, "I lay on my face for a little and thought it out. I am a curse to you and to myself. It is better for me to die. You and Letty would have cried over it, but you could not have helped it."

"No," said Faith, looking him firmly in the eyes, "we could not have helped going through life pointed at as the suicide's children, with peo-

ple hinting that this was hereditary, and that we would sometime take the same way out of our troubles. What kindness would that be to us, father?"

Ralph slowly shook his head. "You think," he said, "that I go back to drink as to a joy, to a pleasure, an indulgence that I love. You are mistaken, Faith. I go as one dragged by a strong chain, hating my bondage, unable to resist. Well has the Bible said, 'Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.' It is bitter as gall to me. It fills me with madness and a burning pain, and always adds to my horrible weight of unrest. I tell you, Faith, sin is the chastisement of sin. The sinner carries in himself his penalty. To-day I came here to be freed at last of myself."

"You could not, father. Were your body lying here cold and still, you would yet be consciously yourself, through all eternity. Give me your hand. I am going to kneel here and ask God to grant me for you this one thing, that you shall not die by your own hand."

And having prayed, Faith, weeping, quietly led her prodigal father home.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN WINTER SWEEPS THE SEA.

“Oh, madness to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God, with these forbidden, made choice to rear
His mighty champions, strong beyond compare,
Whose only drink was from the limpid brook.”

BY the moonlight falling through the little window of their bedroom in the gable, Faith saw a small white-robed figure slipping out of bed and going gently down the stair. This was Letty, and Faith knew why she was wakeful and where she was going. But Faith neither stirred nor spoke; she knew that Letty preferred to suppose her to be asleep, and so she seemed to be. Father, also wakeful in his back room below stairs, saw his door swing silently open and the short white figure stand as one listening. He spoke: —

“Letty child, why are you here?”

Letty stole across the floor and sat down on the side of the bed, passing her hand gently over

father's face. Since father had been living soberly it had been safe to put back various bits of furniture into his room. It was still a bare little place, — they were so very poor, — but Letty and Faith had done their best, and there was a big braided mat on the floor and a muslin curtain at the window and a white counterpane over the bed. Letty sat on the side of the bed.

“Father! you won't do it again, will you?”

“Is it that which kept you awake, poor child? No; I will not try to take my own life again. If that, as Faith says, will make things worse for you, I will bide my time. But, Letty, in a case like mine, life itself becomes as heavy a punishment as can be borne. If Cain felt as I do, I should think he would have wanted every one that found him to kill him! The very powers of the mind that are intended for our comfort and pleasure become our torment — memory, for instance. I have been lying here cursed by remembrances. I thought of my bright boyhood, my early home, my first success, of your mother, of the fair promise of our life, and then how in a few years all this was changed and devastated by my sin! I contrasted what I am with what we all might have been but for me. Your mother might

still have been alive, in a home worthy of her; you, Letty, would have been as tall and strong and beautiful as Faith. And both of you would have had all that can make life fair. And I have bartered all this for what? For pleasure? for any good? for a selfish joy? No; I have sold my life for naught, and have not increased my wealth by its price. What have I gained by sinning but continuous misery, shame, degradation, loss, despair? No need to tell me that sin is a hard taskmaster, and its wages death. I have tried it. What is this cruel habit which drags a man down until living is a continual hell? Why should a man be as I am now, when he might have been like the angels that excel in strength? Letty, God's Nazirites have the best of it both in this world and in the world to come. Righteousness is gain in this life as well as the next. Why can't people see it that way?"

His tone was high and excited. He tossed on his pillow; his head and hands were hot. Letty passed her hand gently over his heated face. "I made you a pitcher of lemonade this afternoon, and have kept it cool for you," she said. "I will bring it."

She went into the kitchen and came back, then

held the pitcher to her father's lips. "Drink all you can, father; it will do you good."

"You are like a ministering angel to me, my poor little Letty. I have been the prey of a demon, and you have done all you can to fight the demon; but it is of no use, Letty; he is too strong for both of us. I wonder how much I am to blame about it, child. Did I have some terrible inheritance that I could not help, could not overcome? I think there have been times when I tried. And then that weakness of my will—that was the most cruel inheritance of all. Sometimes I think I have been insane about this thing and am not responsible. I know very well that in keeping God's commandments there is great reward. Then why didn't I keep them? I wanted to, I think. Am I to blame?"

"You ask me questions too hard for me, father. Try to go to sleep."

"Parents should be very careful about what inheritance they give to their children. Suppose some one of my ancestors loaded me with this drink curse; he will have much to answer for. And there is Hugh," continued father, with excitement.

Yes, there was Hugh. Letty often thought

about him, the jolly, kind-hearted boy. Was he like his father to drag a lengthened chain?

Kemp lay muttering to himself. Where Hugh was or what he was doing, Letty did not know, but they were both in God's hand and so not so very far asunder; and though no words of hers, of love, warning, or entreaty could reach Hugh, her prayers could enter into the ear of God and have power with him who holds the hearts of all men in his hands.

"I'll sing for you, father, and you will try to go to sleep," she said.

And Faith, awake and mournful in the one room overhead, heard Letty softly singing, —

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is found for your faith in his excellent Word."

Next day Ralph Kemp was feverish and gloomy, and did not rise from his bed. He said he was sick, but wanted nothing. Faith walked over to the village to get lemons for him and beef to make him some broth. Then as she had no lace to make she took The Goblin and Kiah Kibble's boy, at low tide, and they rowed up the beach to a little cove where oysters were found, and dug a few to cook for her father.

Kiah Kibble was on the sand waiting for them when they came back. He noticed Faith's despondent face. "Keep up heart, Miss Faith," he said; "the time hastens on, and before long this troubled age will have passed away and all evil will vanish and only good be known."

"It will take a long time to get rid of all this evil that is here now, I think," said Faith; "and a good many of the people in the world are no more fit for the new age than for heaven."

"At the worst," replied Kiah, "life passes quickly, and when you reach my age you will find that all these troubles you are having seem light and short when you look back on them."

"Even that thought does n't cheer me up," said Faith. "I want some good here and now; and years do not seem short to me, but even days seem very long;" and she picked up her little pail of oysters.

Kiah looking at her, straight and strong and full of health and youthful vigor, as she stood there in her canvas shoes, her leather gloves, rough dress and hat and long apron of ticking, her outfit for oystering, scalloping, or fishing, thought that so much strength and beauty should make its own good cheer and that the life before her was surely long enough for much good to be in it.

“Don’t you be down-hearted, Miss Faith,” he said kindly. “The good will come into your life before you know it. Live up to your name. There is nothing like faith to keep the heart easy.”

“I’ve been idle too much lately,” said Faith, as she carried her oysters homeward. “I must have more work to keep me from brooding; and then we are getting terribly short of money, and even such shabby clothes as Letty and I wear give out and must be replenished. If I don’t have orders by to-morrow, I must make work for myself somehow. I wonder if I could make anything by going out cranberry-picking?”

She stood on the dune behind Kiah Kibble’s shop and looked toward the big marsh. The cranberry-picking had begun. It was a bright scene that the afternoon sun lit up and Faith paused to enjoy it. The green marsh was scattered over with groups of pickers, men, women, and children. The old refuse clothing of the year is reserved for the picking, and a gay assortment of odds and ends of many wardrobes appears on the marshes. Pink, blue, and green sun-bonnets; plaid and red shawls; all colors of calico or flannel gowns; blue and white and scarlet ends

of neck scarfs fluttering in the breeze; red and blue flannel shirts; green and yellow and red flannel petticoats over which light-colored cotton gowns are kilted high. The tin pails shine in the sun; the new barrels take a pale primrose-yellow tint. Along the edge of the marsh the fall flowers are in their splendor; just beyond them are drawn up spring wagons, saddled horses, shabby buggies and sulkies, in which the pickers arrived. The screens, tended each by three or four men or girls, the big blue wagons loaded with the newly filled barrels, the tally keepers in chairs on little platforms, the inspectors stalking like tall cranes among the stooping pickers—all this makes a busy scene, full of color and intense life.

“They say it is not unhealthy work and is pleasant when one is used to it,” said Faith to herself. “Letty and I have never wanted to be thrown with the rest of the people that way, but if we must, we must. I wonder if I can earn much at first, and if it will not spoil my hands for the lace.”

But next day Faith had to go to the village with Letty’s work, and there were letters. One was to her with an order for six handkerchiefs for a

bride's trousseau — wanted at once — and one for Letty from New York.

Letty came out to meet her, her finger on her lips. “Father is asleep at last, and I'm so glad. Poor man! he has just moaned and moaned and mourned for hours. Do you think he is getting softening of the brain, Faith?”

“No; it is just mental and bodily weakness from lack of his usual stimulant. Let us sit down out here, Letty. Here is a letter for you. I am sure it is about Hugh. It is from Mr. Julian I am certain, and written to you because you are the eldest, you know.”

Letty was so tremulous with joy she could scarcely open the letter.

“Yes! four big pages, and signed ‘Your sincere friend, Kenneth Julian.’ O Faith, isn't this grand? What beautiful writing! —

I found Mr. Tom Wharton's address and went there on some business I had raked up in the gutta-percha line. I asked for your brother, introduced myself, and in the course of conversation said, “I met some people of your name on — beach this summer. Were they relatives, do you think?” “Probably not,” he said; but I went on — “A Mr. Ralph Kemp, formerly a professor of literature or Latin, and Miss Letty and Miss

Faith." He interrupted me: "My sisters! Did you really see them? How are they?" and then no end of questions. I answered as I best could, telling only what I had agreed with Miss Faith should be told. Evidently you are not forgotten, and are as dear to him as he is to you. A fine lad, I think; very fine, hearty, frank, friendly, honorable. I will not tell you what I said of you both. Written, it might seem as if I tried to flatter you; but it was the least I could say. He told me how it was that you had been parted so from him. He said at his sisters' instance and earnest advice he had given that pledge not to communicate with them until he was twenty-one. He thought the promise wrong, and often had more than half a mind to tell his uncle it was an iniquity, and that he must take it back and go to visit his sisters.

"Oh, no, no!" cried Faith, "he must not; it is better so."

"He must not take back his word," said Letty. "He must stay there. We could not have him come here to this house and see father as he is."

"You must write to Mr. Julian and tell him to say to Hugh that if he loves us, he will stay with uncle and fulfill his pledges in every particular and make of himself the best that he can; that we have learned to consider our uncle's way right and wise."

“I will write to-night,” said Letty. Then, reading again :—

I advised him to take no step of the kind without your consent. I told him that I would tell you how he felt, and that it would be well to be guided by your judgment. The opening in life that he has with his uncle is a good one. Mr. Wharton, he tells me, — and other people also tell me, — is a man stubborn and whimsical, but also thoroughly upright and just; a man to be relied on and who, in spite of his crochets, is of excellent judgment. Your brother invited me to call upon him one evening, and I did. The house is handsome and pleasant, well provided with books and pictures, and Mr. Wharton was hospitable. Of course I did not mention any of you before him.

“I see clearly,” said Letty, laying down the letter, “what is our duty. We must ask Mr. Julian to earnestly warn Hugh to observe strictly all that he has promised our uncle, and we, on our part, must have no secret communication with him through anybody. Now we know how Hugh is getting on and how he lives, and he knows that we are living and love him as ever. That is enough, and more than we had expected. Two years longer it will be, and no more, until Hugh is twenty-one. To-morrow will be his nineteenth birthday; then in two years he can come to us.

Two years will not seem long; we have lived through six. I will write to Mr. Julian to-night and thank him and tell him what I want, and tell him also that it is best that I should not write again, for that would be a way of evading the strict keeping of our promise."

"Yes," said Faith. "Let me see the letter, Letty. What is this heading? 'JULIAN & WOODROW, REAL ESTATE BROKERS.' So that is his business! I did not know. Once he told me that he graduated at college three years ago, and that he had been since then to Europe and had made a trip south and to California and to the Northwest, looking up the real estate business. Dear me, Letty, it must be worth while living, to be a man and able to go to places and see and do things! Look here! Why don't you ask me what my letter is about? It is about six handkerchiefs that I am to make. That is not as good luck as to dabble in real estate, is it?"

"That depends upon whether your dabbling results in losing or gaining. It would be less distressing to bungle on a handkerchief than to lose a big sum in real estate business."

"The excitement of the work would be worth something," said Faith. "However, this order

keeps me from going to the marshes to pick cranberries, and I should have hated to leave you alone all day, Letty."

"Nothing seems hopelessly bad when we are together," said Letty; "and now that we have heard from our brother, how happy I am!"

When one lives in a dungeon, a very small ray of sunlight seems comparatively brilliant. When one has long lived in gloom and despondency, some small turn for the better in affairs may raise the spirits remarkably. This hearing from Hugh, or rather of Hugh, although they should not be able to see him for two years, and had no hope of hearing directly from him in that time, shed unaccustomed brightness into the lives of Faith and Letty.

Letty sang at her work, in thought following Hugh about his daily business, fancying the commodious home where he lived, a home over which no shadow of dishonor had fallen. She imagined what Hugh's life might be in the years to come, a reputable business man with a handsome home. Should she and Faith ever go to visit him in that home? She would be sure never to tell him of some sad days they had lived through with father. His father must stand before him with as unclouded a memory as possible.

Should they tell their father what they had heard about Hugh? The sisters consulted about that in whispers, after they had gone to bed; they concluded that they had better say nothing, it was so very uncertain how father would take anything. He had no expectation of hearing from or of Hugh, and Faith said to Letty that it was well to let well enough alone, and bad might he made worse by meddling. Still it was natural to wish to tell some one of their good news, and Letty told Kiah Kibble the first time that they went down to the boathouse to sit for an hour or two.

Mr. Kemp, after lying in bed for a week and sitting dully about the house for another week, became very restless; he wanted to go out in *The Goblin* and he wanted to go to Kiah Kibble's, and when he was cruising in *The Goblin* he was likely to direct his course to the wharf and to danger. When he was at Kiah's he kept looking toward the distant cluster of roofs and steeples that marked the town. It was borne in upon the daughters that the days of their father's abstinence were numbered, and their sum was very nearly told.

"Come, Mr. Kemp," said Kiah, "active work

is what you want ; swing a mallet or a hammer, or handle a saw. Take hold here with me, and I will tell you what to do. Never mind if you do spoil a bit of lumber."

"My muscle is all gone," said Mr. Kemp. "I have no grip left. See how flabby my arm is. And I've no taste for work ; it seems as if I could n't take hold. My interest in everything is gone. And then, when I consider what I was, the high place I held and the higher place I might have reached, I can't come down to manual labor."

"I consider any kind of manual labor a coming *up* from doing nothing," said Kiah. "I'm dead sure that the Lord hates idlers. He set man work to do in Eden before he fell, to help keep him from falling, and after he fell he made him work harder, to keep him out of further mischief. I delight in work."

"*Sic se res habet : te tua, me delectant mea,*" said Mr. Kemp with a grand air, "which I will translate for you, Mr. Kibble, freely : 'So the world goes : my affairs interest me, yours interest you.' I have no interest in mallets and oakum ; you have none in Latin."

"Well, here comes Luke Folsom," said Kiah in

a low voice. "Don't let him lead you off; I see he has a jug in his hands. For your daughters' sake."

Luke came near. Kiah, mindful of the sisters sitting in the shade of the shop, was cold and curt with him. "Take yourself along, Luke. That bucket of yours carries what I don't approve of."

"It never hurt me," said Luke. "I'm man enough to hold my own; I'm no tippler, and I'm no temperance crank. When I want a drink I take it."

"There is nothing very wonderful or very manly in that," said Kiah. "My dog does the same, but my dog goes beyond you; he don't take a drink when he don't want it, as many men do; and he don't take a drink that will hurt him either. He takes what nature made for him."

"I suppose at this rate you'll not take a drink of my beer," said Luke. "Won't you have some, Kemp?"

"No," said Ralph with dignity. "I don't like beer. It is a very coarse, vulgar drink. The ancients said it was merely a corrupt similitude of wine."

Luke laughed. "Are you putting on temperance, Kemp?"

“Get you gone, Folsom,” said Kibble. “When a man sets himself to tempt his neighbor he is a true yokefellow of the devil.”

And so in sorrow and in cheer the autumn passed and now November winds moaned across the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

AT CHRISTMASTIDE.

Temperance is a tree which has content for a root, and for fruit, calm and peace. — *Buddha.*

NOW at last it seemed that Ralph Kemp's final effort at reform had come to naught, for the little money which he had gathered during the summer was dissipated in drink. There were days when the two daughters sat alone at their work, too sad to speak, not knowing where their father was, but sure that he was doing very badly; and there were nights when he did not come home. There were also days when he came home possessed of the demon alcohol, and Letty locked him in his room, in his dull stage of drunkenness, that he might be safe during the stage of violence.

“There's no use in having any more hope,” said Faith. “We were idiots to be deceived, or to lay out any effort at helping on a reform. We might have known it could not last. I never did

think it would in reality. You can't place dependence on men anyhow. If they fail of being regular fiends, the women of the house have much to be thankful for, and should accept with patience all sorts of small disorders and annoyances."

"O Faith, don't speak so!" said Letty. "Think how many good men we have known of. Hugh will be a good man, and there is Uncle Wharton."

"He's a sample of what I said," retorted Faith. "Because he does not trample the whole moral law underfoot, and is only surly and stubborn and cranky, we must call him *good*! I suppose as men go he is a pattern."

"Kiah Kibble is a very good man," suggested Letty.

"No doubt. He would be a treasure in a family. He neither steals, swears, drinks, nor fights,—he only forgets to clean his nails, shaves but once a week, sits in the house with his hat on, and goes to table in his shirt sleeves."

"But that is the way he was brought up!" cried Letty.

"Of course; and I expect he just luxuriated in being brought up in that way. Men take to all sorts of horrid fashions as readily as ducks do to water."

Letty could not help laughing.

“At least, Faith, there is Mr. Julian. I fancy he is all right, both mannerly and morally.”

“If we knew him better, we should find out that he has more faults than there are hairs on his head! If his faults are not loud and assertive, going beforehand to judgment, it must be because his aunt Mrs. Parvin and his sister Patty have taken him well in hand. Don't you suppose, Letty, that when our father began to go astray our mother might have stopped it? She might have had him bound hand and foot, and kept him prisoner until he not only promised to do better but was afraid not to do better. For the sake of her children, she should have taken extreme measures. Think what a burden we have to bear.”

Letty shook her head.

“I think it could not have been done.”

“I read of a lady,” said Faith, “who, the first time that she found her husband intoxicated, had his head shaved, mustard plasters and leeches put on, and treated him as a case of brain fever, and would not allow him afterwards to convince her that it was anything but brain fever. She said she knew the symptoms and the remedies, and she

should always apply them; she should not allow him to die of brain fever. And he did n't dare to have it after the second attack either."

"I hope that is more than a made-up story," said Letty.

"It ought to be. There is real good sense in it," replied Faith.

Letty noticed that Faith was more despondent over their troubles and more fitful in her moods than formerly. Her courage under privations and disappointment seemed to be failing. She was no longer full of funny speeches and snatches of song. Letty had now often to provide fortitude for two and to care for all the little affairs of daily life which Faith at last seemed to consider of no consequence.

Winter was always hard on Faith. She was deprived of the free life of the beach; her rocky bower was covered with sleet; the ships now kept far out at sea; the harbor was desolate; scarcely a bird was to be heard. Wind, cold rain, sharp, icy storms rendered out-of-door life impossible. Letty had fairly to importune Faith to go to the town to purchase the usual clothing which they provided early in the winter and made up as they had leisure.

A lover of books and of beauty, shut out from both, Faith sat at her routine of lace work with a heavy heart.

Letty exerted herself to cheer and encourage her. She planned for the future.

“Hugh will be established after a while and have a nice home, and then you must go and live with him. It will be only right, Faith—one for Hugh, one for father. I will stay with father and you will always write, and you and Hugh will send us presents to help keep father’s mind occupied.”

“Do you think I would ever leave you, Letty? Am I such a selfish coward as that? No one could persuade me — Hugh, nor any one. I shall stay by you and share your lot as long as we two live. Do you think I would have a moment’s happiness if I went away and left all this heavy burden resting on you, you poor little patient soul?”

But while Letty and Faith thought for each other, there were those who thought for them both. Hugh Kemp had not failed to cultivate the acquaintance of Kenneth Julian, and Kenneth encouraged him to an intimacy. True, neither Hugh nor Kenneth heard any more from Faith

and Letty, but it seemed to Hugh that he was in closer communication with his sisters when he saw one who had passed the summer near them. Hugh began to spend an evening frequently with Kenneth and Patty, and when the weather was gloomy and winter made its coming particularly obvious, they spoke of the dreary lives of the sisters in the house on the beach.

“Let me tell you something to do,” cried Patty one evening. “Let us send them a Christmas box. We three will pack it here, some evening. We will make it a real treat, with all sorts of things in it to help tide over the dreary weather.”

“Good!” cried Kenneth; “it takes girls to think of real sensible things like that. Here I have been wishing — which is merely vain wishing, and I know it — that they could be got away from the beach, but Patty goes straight to the mark and tries some way of making them happier where they are. I don’t know how good political economists women would be; I think they have never had a chance in that line; but there was never a man could match them in domestic economy, in making the best out of a bad bargain, in administering upon a defeat, in well applying littles.”

“On the ground that ‘Who is faithful in little

will be faithful also in much,'” said Hugh, “we must consider that the only reason why women have not been shining lights in political economy is because they never have had opportunity. Miss Patty, I thank you with all my heart for your kind thought. When shall we set about this?”

“At once,” said Patty, “so that the box will surely be there by Christmas. I wonder how they will know that it is at the station and how they will get it over.”

“I will write to Kiah Kibble,” said Kenneth, “to get it for them.”

“Then be sure to say that your sister and Mr. Kemp’s son are the ones who send the box. These young ladies would not want Mr. Kibble or any one else to think that they get boxes from stray young men.”

Hugh gave a grateful look at the plump and beaming Patty.

“Send your parcels here, both of you. And, Kenneth, you hunt up a box and next Monday night we will pack it,” said Patty, all enthusiasm at the idea. “Kenneth, pull that stand around this way. I hear Ann in the hall, and I know she has a tray of refreshments for us—tiny sandwiches, chocolate, macaroons, and olives. I will

go call Uncle Doctor to share with us, and then he'll want a little music and a game of some kind."

"Let us put some games in the box," said Kenneth. "They may amuse Mr. Kemp; and I shall send him three or four copies of some beautiful new editions of his favorite classics."

"I wish you could tell me father's size near enough so that I could send him a suit of clothes and an overcoat," said Hugh to Kenneth, with a blush that his father through his own faults must be in need of such presents.

"I believe I can, near enough," said Kenneth in a hearty way that took existing facts as a matter of course, and somewhat relieved the situation.

"We had to look out for a real large box, Mr. Kemp," said Patty on Monday evening, "when your parcels began to come. Did you buy out a whole shop? You must have spent a fortune!"

"Oh, no, I did not; but my uncle has given me a liberal salary for two years, and as I have scarcely any expenses, I have a nice little fund laid up. I'll show you my things."

"Do," said Patty; "and I'll exhibit mine and Kenneth's. I hope yours are useful, for Ken and I bought nonsense, except the books."

Hugh laid aside two large parcels. "Those are just for father," he said; "you won't care to see them. Here, I bought each of the girls a shawl and a dozen handkerchiefs, a pair of these pretty worked white aprons, some collars and cuffs and neckties, which they can divide as they like. And there is an envelope for each of them with my picture—one just taken, one two years ago." He did not mention that with each picture there was a five-dollar bill.

"And what is this soft lovely stuff?" cried Patty, "dress goods? Oh, what good taste you have! And these shawls!"

"A dress for each of them. Will they really like it, do you think? Camel's hair they call it."

"Of course they'll like it. I think it beautiful. This dress will suit a tall fair girl so well. And this pattern is for the dear little Letty. How I should like to see them both! Well, your presents will be worth getting. See these three engravings from Kenneth. Don't you think the narrow dainty frames are just the thing? He said he wanted them to have something pretty to look at. And see these books? These in paper are French ones for Faith, and an Italian grammar and dictionary and two books, so she will try to

learn Italian. Kenneth says she needs more to occupy her mind and divert her thoughts. And I send this glove case with gloves in it, and this plush case of perfumery and this pair of pretty vases ; and how do you think they will like these? — Huyler's best candies and a box of crystallized fruits and this box of nuts ! That box has fruit in it packed so nicely, and those two tin cans have good things, I can tell you ! One is full of macaroons and the other of gingersnaps, and I am so fond of olives and preserved ginger that I send a jar of each. I hope they don't break ! Would n't that be truly horrible ?”

“We will pack carefully. Suppose we wrap each picture in a shawl. What a lovely pathetic thing this ‘Return of the Mayflower’ is — the Pilgrim men and women standing on the beach watching the vessel fade away on the horizon line ! Their last link to England is severed. ‘Faithful unto Death,’ that seems to be the motto of their lives. And this is such a charming seaside picture — ‘Cupid in Vacation.’ I have looked at that so often !”

“Ken says that young woman is the exact picture of your sister Faith. He says he never saw her without thinking of the picture, and

never sees the picture without thinking of her. She must be very beautiful."

"She is," said Hugh. "I was only thirteen when I left her, and I had always thought that my sister Faith was one of the brightest, most perfect creatures I ever saw. I remember when we were out in the street together people would constantly turn to look after her and say, 'What a lovely girl!' and she was never aware of it. She never thought of her appearance, and was just as easy and self-forgetful as a child of three."

"You will be very happy when in two years you go to see them."

"At that time," said Hugh, "I shall do more than go to see them. Those two girls are not to be left to fight the world and care for father alone. A pretty brother I would be to allow that! What sort of a son to my dead mother will I be if I neglect her daughters? All that reconciles me to this present waiting and to keeping the bargain that Letty made for me is that so I am getting into a position where one day I can efficiently help them."

The box was not finally nailed up until after eleven that night. Kenneth and Hugh decided upon certain partitions in it to keep Patty's pet

jars and the heaviest books from wrecking Huyler's bonbons or assailing the engravings. It would have been a pity to have that engraving of *The Angelus* ruined!

"It is good luck that Uncle Doctor is off to-night," said Patty, as, tired and flushed, the three sat down to share the tray of refreshments which had long been waiting for them.

"Uncle Doctor is something of an autocrat, and wants his house closed at half-past ten; no visitors allowed later. Our old cousin Jenny, though, is not so severe with us and she doesn't mind it a bit."

"I'll eat my sandwiches and fly before Uncle Doctor comes in!" cried Hugh. "I don't want to be marked out of his good books. I had fancied him rather friendly to me. I shall have all I can do to make peace with Uncle Tom, for he never leaves his library until I am in, and I am almost never out in the evening late. In fact, we usually go together, and this place is almost the only place I go without him. On the whole, I don't think a little strictness about hours hurts us young folks."

"It does not," said Kenneth. "I've made up my mind from what I have seen that young men

who spend every evening in society or amusement, and young women ditto, make very little that is really valuable of themselves."

Out of the city and along the lines of railroad went that famous box, and finally Kiah Kibble rolled it into a heavy springless beach cart drawn up against the station platform. Kiah felt as if he were having a grand Christmas himself, in the joy of taking this box to the shadowed house on the beach. What a surprise it would be to them! He would roll it in, open it for them, and hand Letty that little note, which merely said:—

"Mr. Kemp's son and my sister have prepared a Christmas surprise for Miss Letty and her sister. Will you see that the box reaches them on Christmas eve?"

KENNETH JULIAN."

Then he would go away and in peace by his own fireside he would read:—

"The time draws near the birth of Christ:

The moon is hid; the night is still;

A single church below the hill

Is pealing, hidden in the mist.

.

— Of rising worlds by yonder wood.

Long sleeps the summer in the seed.

Run out your measured arcs, and lead

The closing cycle rich in good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

Letty and Faith had given him those three sections of "In Memoriam," printed large and clear, and in a little border of their own painting, and next to his Bible it was Kiah Kibble's favorite reading. He carried out his plan, delivered the box, opened it, and went his way, although both the girls asked him to stay and see what was in the box.

"No, no; I'll come again, and then you can show me what you like," said Kiah.

"He is a real *heart-gentleman*, if he does eat in his shirt sleeves," said Faith ruefully.

Oh, what work, what excitement in unpacking that box! Father was at home and sober, and he shared in the joy. True joy it was for him to know that the absent son had not forgotten him, for father loved his children well, though he had been all unable to exercise self-restraint for their sakes. For Letty "The Return of the May-

flower" and two books were marked "From Kenneth Julian"; but Faith received a Benjamin's portion. The two pictures, heaps of books, two boxes of bonbons—all were marked, "Miss Faith, from Kenneth Julian." Faith flushed rosy with delight; the dimples played in her lovely rounded cheeks.

"That picture looks just like you, Faith," said her father. "I am sure he saw the likeness. Mr. Julian has not forgotten you, it seems."

"I wish Mr. Julian had not sent things," cried Letty, distressed; "nor his sister—only our Hugh."

"You might let me take a little comfort," said the excited Faith, suddenly beginning to cry with the vicissitudes of her feelings.

"Letty," said her father, "if you knew your Cicero as well as I do, you would remember that he says, 'Virtues overdrawn are all liable to become vices.' So it is with you, my child. Your prudence is exaggerated into prudery. You are not kind to Faith."

"She is!" sobbed Faith. "She is a little angel, and I am silly."

"I am real glad," said Letty, "that you have the books and the pictures; they will be something

to cheer you up in dull weather. We will write and thank them all."

"We will write a joint letter and send it to Hugh," said Faith.

Father took great interest in hanging the pictures and putting the books in place. When that was done, he said he had a little money in his pocket and he would go to the nearest farm and buy cream, butter, and a fowl, so that they could have a nice Christmas dinner with the treat of fruit, olives, and other good things that had been sent them.

Letty made up a little box of fruit and candy to give to Kiah Kibble for himself and the boy. "Father shall take it over," she said; "and you and I will get up a lovely dinner and put on our new aprons and ties and plan how to make our dresses and have a delightful Christmas."

Faith sat with half a dozen books in her lap. She seemed to have forgotten what Letty had said about Kenneth's gifts, and her face was once more radiant.

Letty looked at her and her heart ached. Upon this altar which Faith had raised to joy fell the prelibation of Letty's secret tears.

CHAPTER X.

SEARCHING IN THE NIGHT.

There is a devil in every berry of the grape.— *The Koran.*

FOR a little time that Christmas box wrought in the house on the beach all that its senders had hoped. Father, arrayed once more in the garments of gentility, seated in his arm-chair, with a Greek or Latin book in his hands, discoursed to his daughters of his favorite lore. The daughters, meanwhile, were not doing work for other people and for bread. It was a slack time just now, after Christmas, and no orders were to be filled, so the sisters set about making their own dresses. The material was pretty; the work, in father's opinion, was suitable for young ladies. As for the house, people lived in any kind of a house, picnic style, on the beach, and people also went to the seaside even in winter for health. Thus father comforted himself, and addressed his children:—

“Now is a time, my dear girls, when we can return to your long-interrupted education. If

things had been so that you could have pursued your studies without ceasing, you would now be able to understand these works, translating for yourselves mentally as rapidly as I could read them. As it is, I will read a clause and construe to you. It will be a benefit. The volume I hold in my hand is the *Mostellaria* of Plautus, and a very nice edition too."

"But I don't know what *Mostellaria* means, to begin with," said Letty.

"It probably means *The Ghosts*. It is a play based on superstitions of haunted houses — ghosts, or what are called in Tennessee and other places haunts, pronounced *hants* and *harnts*; for our English language is often vilely mispronounced."

"I've no doubt Latin was also in the time of it," said Faith. "Don't you suppose the street cleaners and the aqueduct builders and the laborers on the Alban hills pronounced the Latin very differently from the style of Cicero or Ovid? I do; and perhaps if the ghosts of the guests of Lucullus could rise up in our college class rooms to-day, their hair, if they had any, would stand on end, to hear the way our best scholars pronounce the tongue of Rome."

"I am delighted, Faith, to see that you take an

interest in these subjects and can talk brightly upon them. It is an added pleasure in reading Plautus aloud to know that he is appreciated by you," responded her father with dignity.

So the father read sonorously, and the girls sewed.

"I don't appreciate him at all, if by appreciating you mean to admire him," cried Faith presently. "I think he is coarse, vulgar, and trashy. If I were reading a book opening with the coarse quarrel of a couple of slaves, and with no higher theme than the waste, idleness, vice, lying, and entirely unfilial conduct of a young man who has been trusted by his father, and who shows no manner of filial respect or affection, you would say I had very low taste—if the book were in English."

"But, Faith," said the astounded sire, "this is Latin."

"I'm glad it is anything but English, for books of low moral order are a bane to nations," retorted Faith; "and if it is Latin, that does n't make it better reading. A person with smallpox is none the less dangerous for being wrapped up in a satin nightgown. You know very well that this Plautus was a plagiarist from the Greeks, and that he pitched his plays to the key of the

low taste of slaves and to the most degraded of the rabble, who were in his time the only theater-goers. What I want to know is, why dull, vicious books should be tolerated, even praised, because they were written nineteen hundred or two thousand years ago, in Latin. There are beautiful and noble books in Latin — Virgil and Cicero and the historians. I read some of them to you, and you have read some of them to me; and I don't think these coarse low books should be read merely because they are not English. Who wants to hear how slaves fight and jeer and lie? and how a poor old white-headed man was fooled?"

"Women are given to very narrow views," said her father sagely. "These works are a picture of the times, and from them we get ideas of the manners and morals of the times."

"Only of the worst parts of the manners and morals," said Faith. "Books might be written now of the doings of thieves and prize fighters, and books in the idioms of people who cannot pronounce English decently and never speak grammatically, and in two thousand years they ought not to stand as a fair presentation of our manners or language."

“They would of those of a part of the population, my dear child.”

“A part so worthless that it might as well be forgotten,” said Faith.

“You are taking too narrow views of things,” said Ralph Kemp, drawn back by his daughter’s arguments to the days of his professorship and the methods of instruction once dear. “Let us take an instance. The Lives of the Saints are filled with wild, impossible, absurd, puerile, even disgusting tales. Many people say, ‘Away with such contemptible literature!’ But in fact this is most valuable literature, and in constructing the history of morals or the progress of society these very legends of the saints cannot be overestimated. True, they tell of miracles and events which never occurred, but reflect that these things, in the opinion of that age, might and should have occurred, and would have been beautiful. They give us a picture of the manners, morals, and religious views of an important era, and show us the decadence of family life and national honor and patriotism; the exchange of a large philanthropy for a religious selfishness which even destroyed all the best characteristics of religion.”

“I never have any patience in reading them,” said Faith. “I despise this flying to the desert when one has work to do at home; this raving like a maniac or standing on a pillar has not half the heroism of a daily doing of duty! Our Letty is a better sample of a saint and lives nearer to God and more on the pattern laid down in the Scripture than any life that the legends can show.”

“O Faith!” cried Letty, “hush!”

“You are quite right about Letty,” said father; “but after this digression you will allow me to go on with the *Mostellaria*?”

“Oh, certainly,” said Faith; “I should like to hear it. Your Latin reading is both music and poetry, father.”

By such animated discussions Faith kept up her father’s interest and absorbed his attention, while she and Letty worked on their dresses. Then when the day was at its best, she would go out with him on a brisk walk to get the supplies needed for the house; or, after moonrise, along the beach for stores of driftwood; or, if the sea were unusually calm, in *The Goblin* for a little fishing.

Finally the dresses were done, and Faith had

made her a hat and muff to match, and for two Sabbaths she and father went to church, and father in a good suit and overcoat held up his head and felt himself a man once more.

He planned much what should be done in two years — when Hugh was “his own man,” free of his promise, able to help them all. They would live together in the city and have things like other people.

Faith was silent, but secretly she resolved that her young brother should not be handicapped in his life struggle by having three to support — one of them capable of devastating any home and any earnings in constantly recurring drunkenness. Faith had no hopes of father’s reform. She did her best to divert him and keep him from his cups, but always with a heavy heartbreaking consciousness that soon the effort would prove futile.

“Talk to him, Faith; keep him disputing and instructing,” said Letty. “You know how to do it; I don’t. I always fall in with his views, or, if I differ, I am silent. I cannot argue; you can, and you are brisk and wake him up.”

Father was still reading his new books to them. “I wish, Faith,” he said, “that I could rouse in you enthusiasm for classical study. You weigh

the books too much by their subject matter. True, that is often light, trifling; but how weighty are Cowper's themes of a pet hare, a wet rose, and Mrs. Montague's feather curtains?"

"I hate Cowper, except some of his hymns, and John Gilpin."

"There is no study more sharpening and strengthening and refining to the mind than the pursuit of all the niceties and subtleties of the classic tongues. I wish I had De Quincey's works here to read you his opinion," said father serenely.

"Don't you want to hear my opinion of De Quincey?" cried Faith. "He writes very beautiful English, but he is shallow. He is vain, selfish, petty, carping, gossiping, tattling — a weazened little silver-tongued scandal-monger! He is all talk, talk, talk! He had great natural abilities, and was immensely vain of them, and how did he use them? Put himself by the use of opium in such a state that for ten years he could neither think, write, nor converse properly. With endowments that would have made a fortune, by the indulgence of a depraved appetite he ceased to maintain his family and became with them a burden on his friends. I can think of no more contemptible, disgusting picture than he draws of

himself, shut in at home on a winter night with his wife at her sewing, while he has at his elbow a whole decanter of laudanum to drink, and intends to sit up from six in the evening until five in the morning swallowing innumerable cups of tea, and taking spoonful after spoonful of that filthy, horrible-tasting laudanum! What did he mean to do all day? Why, sleep, and dream wild opium dreams! What a horrible life, that, for a reasonable soul that is bound for the judgment seat, where account must be given to God for every word and act and hour! He raves over his love for his dear children and his beloved M. His love was a mere selfish emotion to prate about while he neglected and disgraced his own. Then look at what he calls his reforms! Can you imagine anything weaker, more contemptible? A few days he abstains, then drugs himself with what would have killed ten men whose lives were worth the saving! Says he is cured when he is keeping up his habit all the time. Gives it as an excuse for failure that he suffered so much and nearly died! I think he had better have died trying to do well than to live as he did. As for his sufferings, they were the harvest of his own sowing, and he should have borne them in silence. I

just loathe that De Quincey — he was contemptible! And look at that other opium eater, Coleridge. The more splendid his mind, the greater shame that he did so little of real use with it. His family neglected and abandoned, himself a burden on the generosity and hospitality of friends, sitting up smoking, wine drinking, opium eating until two or three o'clock in the morning, and coming downstairs, perhaps late in the afternoon, to begin the same performance again, disturbing the households where he had been invited. What kind of a gentleman was that, that with his friends smoked in his hostess' best parlors and rooms, fumigating her furniture when he knew how loathsome his habit was to her, and then, after unnumbered kindnesses, inviting a man given to hard drinking, providing wine for him, and drinking with him at that, when his host was a teetotalter and publicly committed to the temperance cause? Can you imagine a worse sample of men than the famous Coleridge and De Quincey? The greater the gifts God had given them, the more abominable they were in their disuse or abuse."

"O Faith," said her father, "how unsparing you are in your condemnation of the sinner! how

little you know of the power of an appetite, of the violence of temptation! Don't you suppose I know how to sympathize with Coleridge and De Quincey?"

"Still they were to blame, and you also are to blame, father."

"That is quite true. But soon the power of appetite makes one careless of blame; there is the trouble."

"And I think lauding such men for the splendor of their attainments or natural gifts and passing in what is called 'pitying silence' their sins — yes, their crimes against themselves — has made other people feel that these vices were small matters, and that genius atoned for everything! I suppose as far as brain, as genius, as gifts go, Lucifer or Satan was the first of created intelligences — that did not make him any better!"

"It seems, in cool discussion like this, that self-restraint and abstinence would be easy; but in the hour and power of temptation the soul of man is as the desert wheel, and the temptation, like the desert wind, carries it away," said Ralph Kemp.

"But when the hour and power of darkness

came to Christ, prayer and the Word of God were his weapons for victory."

"Ah, girl," said Ralph Kemp, "some of us do not desire a victory; we prefer to yield from the first. The terrible part of it is to begin an enslavement that is so complete."

"I could show these admirers and worshipers of debauched and ungodly genius far nobler spectacles," cried Faith with enthusiasm. "There was a small, humble room in Corinth, where Paul, a master mind of all ages, lived with Priscilla and Aquila, and wrought at tentmaking for bread, and yet preached the gospel of the Son of God. There have been slaves rowing on galley benches, and captives in dungeons, working even there to save souls and serve God in their day and generation. O father, it will be worth so much to hear the 'Well done!' at last, and to be of those who came out of great tribulation and the fires of conquered temptation!"

But father could not hear the voice of the charmer charming never so wisely, and Faith saw the symptoms of speedy relapse.

One day Kiah Kibble was working, inside of the boathouse now, where there was a fire in the curious old iron stove, and the high tide lapped

up and down among the piles on which the house stood. The door opened, and in came Faith, her cheeks crimson from the frosty air, a troubled, hesitant look in her great gray eyes.

“What is it, Miss Faith?” asked Kiah. “Come sit by the stove and let us talk matters over. I see trouble in your face. Is it the father?”

“Yes,” said Faith; “he is going back to drinking again — I see all the signs. Letty and I have tried so hard to keep him entertained, but now he is moody and cross and will not speak or eat or read. He knows well enough where this will lead him; and he prefers to get back to his drink, and he will not try by food or exercise or books to turn aside from temptation. He won’t ask God to help him, because he does n’t want to be helped. And now, Mr. Kibble, you see how it is: that Christmas box brought us a good many nice things, books and pictures, and the overcoat and whole suit for father, and I know how it will be, and I just can’t stand it. He will first pay out all his new good clothes for drink, and come back to us in dirt and tatters. After that, one by one, he will carry off the things that were sent to us. We take so much comfort in them! and, Mr. Kibble, I just cannot have father carry off those

pictures and books, and sell them in that grog-shop; and if Mr. Julian should come here next summer, or his sister, and the things were gone, I should die of shame! Oh, I cannot stand it! I have nerve for a good deal, but not for that! Tell me what I can do."

"You should n't stand it, child; it is asking too much of human nature to put up with the like of that," said Kiah. "You must take hold of the law — there is some law in behalf of drunkards' families. You'll go over to those two saloons in the town, and you'll warn them not to sell to your father, because he is an habitual drunkard. Tell them that if they let him have liquor, or take from him clothing or other goods as pay for liquor, they shall be proceeded against."

Here was a terrible remedy. To go to those dens of drink, stand there as the daughter of a dishonored father, and bring such a charge against that father — how could she? She looked at Kiah with large, entreating, terrified eyes. There were times when this Faith looked piteously like a little child, in spite of her stately height and fine physique.

Kiah answered her look.

"No, miss, I can't do it for you; I would if

I could. They 'd pay no heed to me, as he has a grown-up family that could speak if they wanted him stopped. But I 'll go with you and let 'em see you have an honest friend to stand by your rights."

"We 'll go now," said Faith, rising quietly. "I told Letty I had a few errands to do. I will go and be back before she knows it. Come, Kiah! It is very good of you to be willing to go."

So over to the town walked the bent and gray but sturdy old boatbuilder, and the girl, straight and strong and tall, her eyes fixed before her, her lips firmly set, for a conflict with the demon which destroyed her home.

As from the wood "a ramping lion rushed suddenly" toward Una, "who made a sunshine in shady place," and as at once the ravenous beast crouched subdued at the presence of purity, so there fell in the abode of evil, where the fumes of smoke and strong drink and poisonous breaths loaded the air, a sudden hush and suspense as Faith with head erect and firm of mien did her errand: "I warn you to sell no more drink to my father, Ralph Kemp, who is an habitual drunkard. Drink puts in peril his life and ours. I warn you not to take from him, as pay for liquor, clothing

or household goods. If you do either of these things against which I warn you, you shall be proceeded against."

"Go away with you! This is no place for girls," said the bartender.

"Is it a place for a girl's father?" asked Faith, sweeping a glance around.

"Kemp gets his liquor and gives his pay at his own risk," said the man.

"It will be at your risk, if you give him any more," replied Faith.

"Look ye, Hill," said Kiah, stepping up, "my name's Kibble, and I have brains in my head and money in the bank; and I'll retain a lawyer for her and pay all the expenses of all the suits she brings against you."

"I hear you both. That's enough," said the liquor seller.

And did that set a wall of defense around father? Oh, what can defend the soul that is weak within? A few days after, he was gone, and then, in the silence of the growing night the girls heard him coming up the beach, bawling forth snatches of Cicero and Demosthenes, and then — sudden silence. What had befallen him? They lit the lantern. The night was cold but still.

They went out, searching for him here and there. Had he fallen on a rock? Had he slipped and gone into the sea? Or, overcome by stupor, was he lying on the dune among the long grasses, slowly freezing to death? Let him lie! Let him go! The world is better to be rid of such as he! But — he was their father; a man made in the image of God; a human soul in dire peril; here was a mother's son; the lover of a good woman's youth. Up and down they searched in the deepening night, and found him at last, cowering under a rock and quivering for fear of demons, and so took him home.

CHAPTER XI.

IN PRAISE OF TEMPERANCE.

“Now to the rivulets fresh from the mountains
Point the rods of the fortune tellers,
Youth perpetual dwells in fountains,
Not in dens or caves or cellars.”

THE most stringent temperance legislation can result in nothing more than to make it difficult for men to obtain strong drink. It cannot be made impossible. It is always true that where there is an evil appetite evil ways for its gratification can be found. The chief benefit of temperance legislation and prohibitory law is that temptation is by it prevented from being thrust upon people; the man who is making honest efforts at reform is helped up by the law; he does not find at every corner something to pull him down; the safety of youth is also in a large measure conserved. But where there are those who are joined to their idols, and who draw sin as with cart ropes, as soon as one evil path is hedged up they will open another.

Thus it was with Ralph Kemp. Faith's warning to the liquor seller Hill had not been effective, for Hill or her father or both had found a means of evasion. Faith was a girl of vigorous spirit, and when she had undertaken anything she persisted; accompanied by Kiah Kibble she went to the two other places in the little town where liquor was sold, and warned them also. Now those three places paid high license, and to protect them under that nefarious license, the druggist was not allowed to sell liquor, except as called for by a prescription. One day Faith was at the town and went into the only drug store to buy some fine white wax for her work. As she stood by the counter a man from the country was handed two bottles, each holding a quart of whiskey.

"I think," said Faith, looking the clerk in the eye, "that *that is a very large prescription.*"

The clerk had the grace to blush.

The sight of that "prescription" made Faith uneasy. Was this the place where father got his liquor? She went across the street to try to match some floss for Letty's work, and while she sat in the store she saw her father enter the drug store. She waited a little, and returned there. Her father did not look around as she entered;

the clerk did not know of their relationship, and the proprietor came from behind the screen — which hides a deal of suspicious doings in some drug stores — and was handing her father a pint bottle of brandy. Faith stepped forward and laid her strong white hand on the evil thing just as her father was putting it in his pocket.

“You cannot have this, father.”

Then to the amazed clerk: “This is my father. I have warned the saloons not to give him liquor. I did not know that I had to give a warning here also! What he buys is not for medicine, but for poison. A prescription! Who wrote the prescription? *Did you?* Take back the stuff. He cannot have it.”

Father stood silent. He was intensely angry and deeply humiliated, but he was sober, and when sober he never forgot respect toward his daughters.

The druggist received back the bottle, then said sharply, “He owes us for ten pints, at fifty cents a pint — five dollars. Will you settle the bill, as you assert control over him?”

“No, I will not,” said Faith roundly. “I do not call liquor bills just debts, any more than I call gambling debts debts of honor. Not one of

the dimes my sister and I earn by hard work shall go for this poison which is destroying as good a father and as accomplished a gentleman as ever lived! I shall go and ask Judge Blakely if this is an honest debt; if it is credible that you gave ten pints of whiskey to one man, *as a prescription!* Your druggist's license is in some danger to-day!"

There was nothing childlike in Faith now: this was a woman, wounded and insulted, rousing in defense of her home and her kin. The druggist trembled before the wrath that blazed in the big gray eyes. Here was not a person to intimidate, but to placate. The man began to hesitate: "I did n't understand it, you see. Of course it is all a mistake, and you may make sure, miss, that I'll never sell him another drop. We'll let it go at that."

Faith went out with her father. She felt that it was her duty to the community to complain of the druggist, but then it would bring her unhappy home into just that much more notoriety, and now that the immediate excitement was over she felt abashed, and as if she wanted not vengeance but a hiding place.

"Is this," said her father with a voice shaking

with rage, "a proper line of conduct for a young lady? What will people think of you when you usurp authority over your father and threaten druggists and make yourself so conspicuous?"

"They will think that I am my father's daughter, and am doing the best I can," said Faith bitterly.

"You are a rash and undutiful girl, and I have a mind never to go home where you are any more!" cried Kemp.

"Where will you go, then?" asked Faith, still angry.

"Into the sea—if I want to," shouted her father.

"Then you will not see Hugh when he comes home. And what about Letty? Letty has not done anything. Come—suppose you wait for me at the first milestone, and I will go and see if there are any papers for you at the school, and then we will go home and go to work, both of us."

"I won't go with you," said Kemp sullenly, "nor forgive you."

"Yes, you must, father. See now; if you cannot like me for myself, you will put up with me for Letty's sake, and for our dear mother's sake.

Besides, you do like me sometimes, and you like to read Latin to me. Let us make friends and go home, and let us keep this secret and not bother Letty. Suppose we find some arbutus for her as we go over the hill. It is early in April, but the spring is early this year."

Finally they patched up a peace and went home together.

There remained yet in the village a source of liquor supply, of which Faith knew nothing, neither did Kiah Kibble. It was a low little den in the outskirts, kept by a negro, and frequented by the lowest class of negroes and whites who could not buy drink elsewhere. Hitherto father had not fallen low enough to go there; the former gentleman and scholar had yet enough native refinement to shrink from a resort so foul. But when liquor was to be had nowhere else, the overmastering passion drove him even to that fiendish place.

There would be some weeks of quiet and peace, and then an outbreak. Faith grew more moody, and longed more intensely for summer, that she might have the comfort that nature yields to hearts that love her well. Letty looked at Faith pitifully, and up to the limit of her small strength

wandered with her on the beach and on the dunes, making out-of-door time pay by getting flowers, leaves, mosses, seaweeds, shells to afford designs for her work. When work was slack Faith and Letty arranged for themselves a new industry, collecting quantities of delicate and beautiful seaweeds, mounting them on cards, and sending **them** to the city for sale. They also painted little sea scenes on the inner surface of great clam shells, and sent them for sale with the weeds. In all these ways they earned money enough to keep the wolf from devouring them altogether.

Sometimes Faith's spirits would rise in the very reaction of youth and health, especially after she had had an excursion on the hills or over to the woods; then she would jest and make Letty and father — who had forgotten his grievances — laugh.

“Here now,” said Faith, standing at the table, her sleeves rolled up from her round white arms, a basin of seaweed before her, “all these cards are my little ships, to bring our fortune home — not very strong little ships, but they have to carry me a pair of shoes and a sun umbrella. There, Letty, how does that spray look? Fine, I think. As the French say, ‘I am not an eagle,’

but I am a good hand at seaweeds. How many did you say you had put to press, Letty? twenty-six? There, you wolf at the door, won't that scare you away? Letty, I'm going to commit the extravagance of getting me a hat with daisies on it. What do you think of that, my dog? And what do you think of that, my cat?"

"By all means get it — and don't think so often about the wolf."

"The wolf," said Faith, "is with us a domesticated animal. Ever since I was acquainted with any zoölogy, the wolf shared our hearth as freely as a kitten. I have been long hoping that he would get tired of having his head and shoulders in our door, and would go away. I have a scientific interest in seeing the tail end instead of the head end. As he won't go, nor even turn around, I might as well get what fun I can out of him, Letty, by commenting on the size and shape of his jaws."

Week by week went on, and now once more the air was mild with the breath of summer and the skies were vivid with her smile. Faith sat in her rock-bound bower and worked, and marked the sails drift by, like white clouds on the horizon line, and Letty sat by the open window, and the

door too was open, and sometimes the bees and butterflies drifted in.

Of what was Faith thinking as she sat on her rocks? She was in the age of hope; life was strong within her; perhaps she had pleasant dreams about days to come. But Letty built her nest among the stars. Earth had little to offer her; life did not leap vigorously in her veins, but, cramped and burdened, tarried on its way as in old age. Faith's visions were full of unrest and of anxious questionings and doubts, while Letty lived in a deep interior calm. Even when father's vagaries most grieved her she had where to lay her burden down.

Faith was looking for some good in this world as it is.

Kiah Kibble was looking for the dawn of a new era here below, but Letty was looking for the days of heaven, and through her heart sang the promises: "The people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee." "Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel."

Sometimes the face of Faith was joyful in what of good the Lord had given her; sometimes it was heavily sad with the sorrows that had come upon her. But the face of Letty was always at peace; she dwelt near Him who is given to be a "hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." It is often thus with the early called, with those who are set to stay on earth but a short time, and have little in them of the earthly.

Now that it was fair weather, they went to the boathouse again, and when there Kiah Kibble and Faith took counsel that Kiah should try to find out where father got liquor. "If we can only keep the stuff from him," sighed Faith.

But one day she came down to the boathouse alone, running swiftly in her excitement, panting, her cheeks aflame.

"Kiah, I can't stand it! I won't stand it! You must help me! Father came back very — bad last night. We heard him coming and went upstairs, and he went to his room and then Letty locked him in. This morning I found that he had been hunting among our little things to find something to carry off to pay for drink, but he

did not seem to have taken anything. When he was asleep I went into his room and found that he had taken away his clothes — the new ones, very good yet, for he had been so careful of them — and his good overcoat — Hugh's present. Mr. Kibble, do you understand? His clothes are all gone now, but a very shabby, mended, frayed old suit. He has not a decent thing left — and — and soon people will be coming to the beach, and he is not fit to be seen. I can't stand it! I won't! I want those clothes back!"

Kiah had laid down his chisel, shaken himself free of sawdust and shavings, and was pulling on his coat.

"Miss Faith, I'll go to the town, and I won't come back without those clothes. I'll sift this out as sure as my name is Kiah Kibble!"

Darkness had gathered about the house on the beach and father was in the heavy sleep that succeeded his outbreaks, when the sisters heard a step on the shingle. Faith looked out of the window and asked:—

"Is that you, Mr. Kibble?"

"Yes; and I've brought the things. It will do no hurt to let them hang here over these bushes and air to-night. I got them out of a

baddish place! No need to come down, Miss Faith, I am not coming in. All safe?"

"Yes," said Faith; "and, oh, thank you so much! Where did you get them? Of course not at the druggist's. At Hill's?"

"No. I went there first and opened the matter, and Hill bluffed me and played sulky; but I said to him, 'See here, Hill; you may be mad because we kept you out of a customer, but you'd be a deal madder to know some fellow was selling liquor here right and left without paying any license and you paying a high one. Do you wink at that game?' 'No, I don't,' says he. 'Show me the man!' 'Help me to find him,' says I; 'for he's here in town, selling on the sly, and he has a suit of clothes and an overcoat that I'm after.' So Hill and the sheriff and I went to work, and by seven we ran our fox into his den; and I got out the clothes and the den is shut and the liquor confiscated, and the negro in jail for selling without a license. So good-night, Miss Faith. I'd like to shut up one of those shops every day."

After a very wild outbreak came always the period of rebound; the pendulum swung back toward abstinence in proportion as it had oscillated

toward intemperance. As in the pendulum the acceleration of motion is proportional to the sine of the displacement, so in the father's mental oscillation, just in proportion to the depth of his drunkenness was the loftiness of his temperance views when he returned to himself. His high state of virtue on the present occasion was increased by having a good suit of clothes and a well-laundered shirt to get into. It never occurred to him to ask how the clothes which he had sold for drink came to be hanging over the footboard of his bed when he became sober.

Having delivered himself to meditation for a day, he came out as a professor of moral virtues and as the careful paternal head of the family. Shaven, neat, and well-dressed, though with a hand somewhat trembling, he seated himself at the breakfast table.

“I have taken unusual pains with my dress, my daughters, for your sakes. The beauty of the weather reminds us that summer is here, and with summer will come summer guests. I do not wish you to be uneasy, my children; I know what is due to you. Faith, you can be as cheerful as you please. Rely upon me to do nothing to mar your prospects.”

Faith flamed crimson. Her prospects! What prospects had she? Oh, how could he speak so! Why could she not be let alone? This was too detestable! If by chance any one spoke to her on the beach, must it be taken for granted that she had *prospects*? She sprang up, ran away to her room, and there cried with vexation, disgust, and mortification.

“Faith is uneven in her temperament of late,” said father tranquilly to Letty. “It is said to be a sign of love.”

“Please, father, do not speak so. Faith and I cannot think of such things,” remonstrated poor Letty.

“And why not?” demanded father.

“Because I am prohibited by my misfortunes, and Faith by your fault!” said Letty, exasperated in behalf of her sister. And that was the severest thing Letty ever said to her father.

“*Sed redeo ad formulam,*” said father magisterially. “I shall do nothing to mar Faith’s prospects. She shall be made happy in spite of herself.”

“Father, promise me you will not interfere — you will not take things for granted; you will not — you will not be talking to Mr. Julian, if he comes here!”

“No, Letty; surely not. It is not needful for you to instruct me in the proprieties of life. No; I will do nothing; for Ennius reminds us: ‘An ill-done good, I judge an evil deed.’ Do not be alarmed. I surely have your sister’s happiness more at heart than you have. Come, Letty, call your sister down to help you, and then seat yourself by the open window. I will go out and bring you a bouquet. Air, light, the wild flowers are to us free gifts of God. What more do we wish? Our home is lowly, our lot is poor; but with free minds the universe is ours. ‘For what in human affairs,’ says Cicero, ‘may seem great to him to whom all eternity and all the magnificence of the universe is known?’ In the realm of thought, my child, we may reign as kings. Happy is the mind fed on the marvels of nature and the glorious developments of philosophy; happy the heart like yours, my child, at peace with itself; happy the young maid, like your sister, whose beautiful face reflects a beautiful mind.”

After a day or two, the sisters, as usual, fell in with father’s changed state, and listened without amazement or irritation while he praised self-control, self-sacrifice, family love, prudence, charity, temperance — all the virtues. He should in that state have been a professor of morals.

When Faith grew weary of the house, she could now go back to the rocks, with the better grace that father was as pleasant as could be wished and was making himself agreeable to Letty in the house. So to her granite throne went Faith and, cheered by the beauty that was all around her, smiled and sang.

Letty and father walked down there to call her home to tea. They saw her as they came, her shining golden hair lit by the sunset against the cold gray rock, her face and figure so full of bloom and life and beauty, like an arbutus blossom upon the dull stone. And they heard her singing a verse that she loved:—

“And I thought I heard him say,
As he passed along his way,
‘O silly soul, keep near me,
My sheep should never fear me;
I am the Shepherd true.’”

It made Letty think of the angels singing in heaven.

And when June was yet in its first flush of beauty, one day the merry shouts of a little boy echoed up the sands and Richard Parvin thrust his bonny countenance into the door of the house on the beach.

“Is that you, Miss Letty? Where is my mermaid? Down at the rocks? There, then, that old Kenneth has got ahead of me! He went to the rocks and I came here, to see which should be first. Oh, dear!”

“Do you want to be first?” said Letty with a benevolence that Kenneth might have called malevolence. “Then run across the edge of the dune, just where you see a little path, and it will take you to the rocks the shortest way and you will be first after all.”

Away bounded Richard; but perhaps he did not find the right path, for when he reached the grotto there sat Faith making lace, and there sat Kenneth on a boulder trying to be agreeable.

But Richard got much the warmer reception, if that was any comfort to him. As for Kenneth —

“I’m afraid you’d not have spoken to me at all, Miss Faith, if you had not hoped for news from your brother.”

“Oh, yes; maybe I might,” said Faith carelessly.

CHAPTER XII.

LETTY HAS HER HANDS FULL.

“Thou art like the rest of men,
Thou 'll go sniffing about the tap till thou does it again;
There's thy enemy, man, and thou knows and I knows as well,
That if thee sees him and smells him, thee 'll follow him down to hell.”

OF all King Arthur's knights, Sir Galahad was the one to whom self-control was the easiest — because he had always exercised it. To him the restraint of the passions had become a second nature; “I could” was yokefellow to “I should,” and upon them “I would” waited duteously. But while the habit of right-doing so upbuilds character that living nobly becomes easiest, and to do evil would be the more difficult, so self-indulgence makes every demand of appetite more imperious, yielding to evil becomes the habit of the mind, and to deny one's self is a herculean task beyond the effort of the weakened will. Of those whom continued indulgence in a vice has made moral weaklings, unable to dwell for any length of time in the strong bracing air of the regions of virtue, Ralph Kemp was a notable example. Each has-

tening year made him less able on any terms to govern his depraved desire for strong drink. It was idle for him to say to his proud young daughter that to spare her mortification he would conduct himself with decency while strangers were near. He was soon scheming that he might drink a little, and no one know it; that he might drink all that he craved and keep out of sight; he argued as if he were capable of leaving off when once he had begun, or as if when possessed by his demon he could rule its manifestations.

It is true that there are men of such vigorous mental temperament that at any point in a career they can say "I will not," and abide by their own decree. We have known of cases where there was that much iron in the blood. Ralph Kemp was made of other material; and being of that weaker mold he insisted upon considering himself strong and relying upon himself. That was what discouraged his daughters. He never in his efforts reached higher than his own level; he never took hold of the strong One for strength.

Letty took a little courage from the thought that perhaps now her father would not be able to get drink anywhere.

"Don't you believe it," said Faith angrily. "The

devil doesn't mean to be outgeneraled by Kiah Kibble and a girl. We have frightened the druggist, warned the licensed saloons, and shut up the one that had no license. Do you think we are to be left to enjoy the fruits of victory? There will be some other little sneaking den opened where least it is expected. Our only hope is that father will want to stay sober for a while."

"Well, for poor Hugh's sake I hope father will stay sober while Mr. Julian and his aunt are here, for Hugh may question Mr. Julian closely when he goes home, and we should hate for him to have a shameful story to tell. But as far as you and I are concerned, it is no worse for us to see our father doing wrong one time than another, is it, Faith?"

"No; I suppose not," said Faith.

"I hope Mr. Julian will not come up here as often as he did last summer. Can't you — stop it, Faith?" continued Letty.

"Why, girl, I don't own the beach."

"I'm afraid you are the one that makes this end of the beach more attractive than the other," suggested Letty.

"You don't want me to scowl and say sharp things to our brother's friend, do you?" demanded Faith.

“O Faith, you know what I mean,” cried poor Letty in despair. “We are not situated as other girls are. We must do differently. I ought to watch over you; I am the eldest, you know, but you are an awfully hard girl to be a mother to!”

Then Faith sank down on her knees beside the chair of her little elder sister, and hugged the pathetic creature to her heart; her strong round white arms clasped Letty firmly; she laid her lovely young face on poor Letty’s deformed shoulder, and she protested that Letty was the dearest little woman in all the world, and they should never be parted, but live together all their days.

But she did not say that she would sit no more on the rocks chatting with Kenneth Julian. Why should she say it? Why not let a little gleam of brightness, a brief vision of the big brilliant outer world into her shadowy and contracted existence? Suppose she kept strictly at the house, immuring herself in summer as in winter, what good would it do? If she kept away from the rocks, Kenneth would come up to the house and sit on the threshold; and it was much pleasanter at the rocks. The blue bending skies, the broad shifting opal of the sea, the huge bowlders, flung together when the echo of the song of the morning stars yet

pealed through heaven, were all so much better environment than the shabby little house on the beach.

Letty sighed: Letty sighed often nowadays; she sighed over her father; she sighed over Faith; they were all numbered, those sighs; their sum total was told above, and when the last sigh was breathed, then divine rest should enter into Letty's soul and a blissful satisfaction be hers in the city of her God.

Faith, watching her father, detected the signs of relapse. "Father," she said, "you know what you promised; you said on Hugh's account, so that Hugh should have no sad news to hear, you would be very careful and not drink any while Mr. Julian is at the beach."

"I never said a word about Hugh — I said on *your* account."

"Whichever account it was, you promised to be good. Now you know if you stop working, if you begin to go over to the town, there will be trouble. Won't you keep your word, father? It seems as if I should die of shame, if I saw you coming home wild and noisy, not knowing what you were doing. Do, father, take some pride in yourself. Bring those books down to the rocks and read to me while I work, and let us talk about them."

“Kenneth Julian will be there.”

“Let him! He will enjoy your talk just as much as I do. I am so proud of you when you read and translate your Latin books and comment upon them, and trace their influence on English literature. Come down there with me, father. I would much rather you did. I don't like to sit there alone — as if — as if I were waiting for people, when I am *not*, but have always been there the six years that we have lived here; and I hate to stay cooped up in the house. Now, father, you can make beautiful nets and hammocks. I'll order the twine, and you come there and make a net while I work lace, and we'll have a book or two and we can read and discuss a little, and at noon I will run up to the house for Letty and the dinner, and it will be a real family party. Then if any one else wants to come and sit there and talk, let him — we won't mind. Do try it. I really would like it so much better that way.”

Father allowed himself to be persuaded. He sat by Faith, netted several times across a hammock, and discussed to Kenneth the *De Senectute*.

But appetite was dragging at father as if it had cast mighty lines about him, and was pulling him toward the foul den where he could obtain its in-

dulgence. The tenderness of Letty, the deference of Faith, the attention paid by Kenneth, the reassertion of what little manhood he had left were all feeble compared with the demands of a depraved appetite. To what a hideous bondage do the sons of Ephraim submit their souls!

“If you go to the town, you will be lost,” said Faith. “When you get where you can see or taste liquor, all is ended with you. Stay here, father. If I were you, I’d rather cut off my feet than have them carry me to ruin and shame!”

Oh, vain remonstrances and vainer cares!

Letty was in her usual seat by the window. She was embroidering a table cover. Mrs. Parvin had been to see her and had brought her several well-paid orders from city friends. Mrs. Parvin had been very, very kind, but Letty felt that Mrs. Parvin had questioned her rather closely about Faith, and that she had cast anxious glances, as became a wise aunt, toward the rocks where might be seen the top of Kenneth’s cork helmet.

Letty’s thoughts were called from Faith by other cares. As she sat and wrought crimson poppies and yellow heads of wheat, Kiah Kibble’s boy came running up.

“Miss Letty! Mr. Kibble ain’t down by the

boathouse to-day. He's gone over to the yard for lumber."

"Well, what of that?"

"Your — father's down there, miss."

"Is anything the matter?" asked Letty, sticking her needle in the stem of a poppy and rising prescient of evil.

"He's awful — full — an' there's two boys there gaming at him, an' I'm afraid he'll rouse mad and do something. An' 'sides, Kiah's 'fraid to have him there when he's drunk, lest he'll get things set afire. 'T ain't safe, Miss Letty, long o' shavin's an' all."

"Run back quickly. I'll come right along and get him home."

And then poor Letty looked toward the rocks. The day was gray, and near the sea, below the grotto, Letty saw seated on the shelving sand her beautiful sister working at her lace, and not far from her Kenneth Julian half reclining on a swath of seaweed; and the two were laughing and chatting merrily together. A mother love for both helpless parent and beautiful sister tugged at Letty's heart. She must go to her father, and yet she did not want to go off and leave Faith alone.

She stood in the doorway and called her:
“Faith! Faith!”

Faith left her work on the beach and came running to the house. The pocket of her white apron was full of French bonbons. It generally was when Kenneth was around; he seemed to consider them her proper diet. As she ran up, Faith took out a handful of the candies and held them toward her sister.

Letty took them absently and laid them on the window ledge.

“Faith, it’s been of no use. Father’s — broken out again. Jerry came for me. He is at the boathouse — and some boys are plaguing him, and Kiah is away. I must go for him.”

“Shall I go with you?”

“No; you know he lets me lead him, but he always acts worse if you are around. Besides, if you come, Mr. Julian will offer to come too, and I would n’t have him see him for anything.”

“No.”

“But — I don’t want to go and leave you down there,” Letty said; “it does n’t look just right. Won’t you stay up here at the house?”

“Then he’ll come up here!”

“Not if you tell him not to. Faith, people

will talk if you let him be here so much. Go and get your work and tell him you will be busy the rest of the day."

"Why should I? There's no harm in it, and no pleasure in staying here in this hot little house! I sha'n't enjoy sitting here and listening to father playing the madman in his room. Why are you so absurd, Letty? I'll change our seat round to behind the rocks, and then he'll be sure not to see father when he comes in. I might as well try to distract my mind from father's horrid ways by talking of Hugh and of pleasant things."

"But, Faith, we cannot be like other girls. We are poor and he is rich. Our mother would have said we had better keep by ourselves. We are a drunkard's children, and we cannot afford to have people talk about us. We have no one to defend us."

"We don't need defending," said Faith. "You are too absurd about me, Letty. Go and get father, if you must. The beach is mine and I mean to sit there."

Letty said no more. She put on her hat and went trudging along the dune, the nearest way toward the boathouse. She could not persuade Faith; she would go and see what was to be done with father.

Faith, something resentful of Letty's efforts at ruling her actions, and very indignant toward her father, stood leaning against the doorway, her hands lightly clasped before her, her eyes on Letty's vanishing figure. Poor dear little Letty! Tears welled into Faith's eyes as she watched her. How heroically Letty bore her burdens! How she tried to care for both of them! Even if she had whims, why not indulge them? It was a pity to make the weight on that honest little heart heavier than it need be. Why not, to satisfy Letty, give up the last and only pleasant thing that was left to her? Perhaps in her way she was just as selfish and self-indulgent as father. Was she like her father? She hoped not. Impulsively she ran to the glass hanging on the wall and looked earnestly at her reflection. Were there lines there like father? Had she his expression? However, down on the beach lay her work, and there was Kenneth. Before long two figures might appear on the crest of the dune — one dogged or reluctant, the other patient, persistent; oh, poor little Letty!

Faith ran into her father's room and removed the basin and pitcher, the chair — all that they usually took away when father was locked up;

she closed the heavy outside shutter of the window, and made all ready for the prisoner. Then, back toward the beach again. But now the charm of the beach had departed. To her there seemed now no beauty in the gray, hazy sky, the ships slowly tacking to catch the fugitive breeze; the tawny sands, the whispering grasses, the lapping wavelets had lost their beguilement. Kenneth Julian could say nothing that would entertain her; she wished he would go home! Lace work was an enormous drudgery, bonbons were detestable, that volume of Jean Ingelow from which Kenneth had been reading "Divided" — what a weariness it was!

She went back and took up her work, saying nothing.

"Has your sister gone to town?" said Kenneth, to say something.

"She never goes there. She cannot walk so far. She has gone to the boathouse."

"Did she want you to go with her?"

"If she had, I should have gone."

"What is the matter, Miss Faith?" said Julian gently. "Just now we seemed to be getting on very well and enjoying ourselves, and now what troubles you?"

“Everything is wrong!” cried Faith. “Nothing is ever right for me. My life got crooked long ago, and it will keep crooked to the end of it. No, don’t pick up the book; don’t read any more. I don’t want to be read to; I am wretched. I want to be alone. I wish you would go home to the hotel, Mr. Julian. You belong where there are happy and reasonable people.”

“If you are in trouble,” said Kenneth Julian, “why not let me help you? I am sure I am willing. That is what friends are for, is n’t it? Your brother is not here; let me do something for you.”

“You can’t; there is nothing to be done. Letty and I have to help ourselves. All you can do is” — and she swept an anxious look toward the dune — “to go.” She was now past asking him to move around the point of rocks and continue reading and conversation, as she had suggested to Letty.

Kenneth rose from the sand, not offended, but calmly taking his dismissal as a matter of course.

“Good-morning, Miss Faith.”

After he had gone a few rods he turned. Faith’s face was bowed upon her knees; she was

crying. At first he wanted to go back and comfort her, then he realized that she preferred to be left alone, and so he presently disappeared around a wide curve in the beach.

It seemed to Kenneth as he pursued his way that it was very unjust that he, a strong young man, should be care-free and in the possession of all the good things of this life, and that that fair young girl should be left to bear so heavy a burden. Could nothing be done for Faith? He had privately asked Kiah Kibble if Letty and Faith were in any personal danger from their father, and Kiah had said that he thought not; they seemed to know how to manage him, and he was not abusive; Letty always locked him up in time. But then, who could trust the vagaries of a drunken man? Sometimes it had crossed Kenneth's mind that this was quite the most charming girl he had ever seen, and that it would be a happy lot to have her share his life and build up with him the gracious pattern of a home that should be a type of heaven. But could or would Faith leave Letty, or would both the sisters leave their father? Could a home ever be built including father — that impossible element in home-making, a drunkard? That would be unjust to

Patty and Uncle Doctor; and how could Kenneth say "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," with father to account for? Besides, had he any reason to suppose that Faith would care for him, even if all were well? No; Faith had never given him any reason to think that; not half as much reason as some other girls had for whom he did not care at all. This question had too many difficulties; he could not settle it. He had reached the hotel. There his aunt met him.

"Oh, you are back? I'm glad of it. We want you to make up a party. You spend a deal of time up the beach, Kenneth; I would not, if I were you. It is not well—believe me."

Kenneth more than suspected that Letty shared that opinion.

Faith, meantime, had ceased weeping and was working with vigor, and Letty appeared along the dune urging her father homeward. It gave Letty some comfort to see Faith sitting there alone. Faith had taken her advice after all! How good of Faith! Faith heard from behind her father's voice, complaining, remonstrating, protesting. She did not look around. Letty was the only one who could govern her father at that stage. Step by step she led him, and at last into his room.

“Now lie down, dear, and rest.”

“I tell you, I'm thirsty. I am burning up.”

“Lie down, dear; I'll get you some water.”

“I say I won't have it!”

Letty was gently pressing him toward his pillow.

“Just rest there one minute, dear, till we think of it;” and then with a quick dart she was outside the door and had drawn the bolts. As for water, Faith had provided a two-quart tin pail of it near the bed; but father would never touch it at this stage.

Letty drew a long breath. She wanted love, sympathy, to be near some one who understood it all and knew how hard it was. She went slowly down to Faith, sat by her, and slipped her hand into hers; Faith held it fast. They were silent for a while, then Faith said:—

“See here, I'm going to have my way now. We can't help father, and we are going to stay in my grotto the rest of the day.”

She led the tired Letty there with gentle force, spread, as she had for Richard, a couch of dry weeds, then went up to the house for more work materials and a basket of luncheon and a pillow. She made Letty rest while she prepared their

dinner, and then while they ate together she resolutely led conversation away from father and other unsafe and distressful channels. After that the two returned to their work as they sat there in the sheltered nook, and the wheat and poppies grew under Letty's fingers and Faith's lace collar advanced toward completion, as the hours of the afternoon wore on.

“What a dear, good girl you are to me, my Faith!” said Letty.

CHAPTER XIII.

KIAH KIBBLE, CHAMPION.

“Ne faren as he that is drunk as a mouse,
A drunken man wot well he hath a house,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a drunken man the way is slider.”

THE house on the beach belonged to Kiah Kibble, and he often told the sisters that it was not needful for them to pay him any rent.

“Why should I care to accumulate money?” said Kiah; “I have enough for what little I want in my old age. My children are comfortably off. If I left money to my grandchildren, it might just make fools of them. I can’t carry money out of the world with me, and it would be looked upon in the next world as very poor trash if I could. If the New Age dawns before I die, then I shall not want money, for then all shall have enough and none too much, and no one shall lack and none shall defraud his brother. I tell you, Miss Letty, that one of the most terrible diseases of old age is avarice, and the way to escape it is by

constant giving, just as people used to escape apoplexy by constant blood-letting."

"That is hard on us, Mr. Kibble," said Faith, "for Letty and I never have anything to give. We can't more than make two ends meet, and that by very hard pulling."

"Don't you mind, Miss Faith, how the apostle said to the lame man, 'Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee'? Money-giving is not the only giving; and to my mind you and Miss Letty are daily giving the most and best that can be, to your father, for love's sake and the Lord's sake. I think I heard you might both be living an easy life with a rich uncle if you'd have deserted him."

"We could n't do that, you know: it would not be right. But we are not too poor to pay your rent, and we mean to pay it. It is only twenty-four dollars a year, and at Christmas our brother sent us nearly half a year's rent. The Kemps have not gone so low that they must take a charity of house rent. If you don't want the money, give it away. There is plenty of call for money for missions; there are orphans and sick people, and the temperance cause needs help. If I were rich, I could find ways enough to use all the money I have to give."

“Oh, ay, so you could. I only thought I might as well begin by giving you the house rent.”

“Well, thanks ; but we won’t take it.”

“At all events no offense intended, Miss Faith.”

“That is all right, Kiah ; you are a good friend to us, and we know it.”

Kiah had heard about father’s fresh outbreak, and he had come up to see about it the morning after. He always felt uneasy concerning the girls when their father was misbehaving.

“I’ll go down to the rocks with you, Faith, if you like,” said Letty when Kiah was gone. “You look real lost and forlorn, someway, sitting here in the house with your work.”

“If you mean that offer because you think Mr. Julian will be there,” said Faith, “you need not disturb yourself, for he won’t. He has gone back to the city. He is in business now and he cannot take a whole summer as he did last year. He will be up once in a while for a few days or a week, and that is all.”

Letty felt greatly relieved, but also she was sorry for Faith ; this cheerful acquaintance had been such a pleasure and recreation in the dullness of her life. And how little the summer offered her to enjoy !

“There comes our Richard!” cried Faith, “and I must take him down to the rocks right away. I would not have him hear poor father going on for anything; and he may wake up and begin any minute!”

Up dashed Richard. “I’m so hot and so tired! I hurried so! I’ve brought some nice things for luncheon, and I’m to stay all day. The hotel folks are off on a sail and a clambake, but I’d rather be here with you, Miss Mermaid. Ken has gone off, and here’s a book he told me to bring you — ‘A Daughter of Fife.’ He told mother she was just like you — the Fife one, I mean.”

“You run on to the rocks, Richard,” said Faith, “and I’ll bring some more lunch and we’ll have a fine day together.”

“Goody!” cried Richard. “I’m awful glad that Ken’s gone, so he won’t be bothering round; are n’t you, Miss Mermaid?”

“Delighted! Travel along and get the grotto in order,” said Faith. “There!” as she watched the sturdy little figure traveling toward the rocks, “all is safe; he heard nothing. Are you coming, Letty?”

“No, dear. I should not be easy there, and

besides, I'm tired. I went over to the boathouse pretty fast yesterday, and this — always tires me."

"This" meant father's outbreak.

"You poor little darling, you do look worn out. Now you shall not work a stitch for two hours. Lean back here and let me make you comfortable. And here is half a box of chocolates that I had yesterday. You eat away at them now, and you read this book that Richard brought up. You'll enjoy it, and I have this collar to finish and I can't read while the little fellow is with me, it disappoints him so."

Faith tucked up Letty's feet on a chair, took away her work, gave her book and candy, and made ready a neat little luncheon on a side table and covered it with a napkin. Then she put her own noonday meal in a little basket and prepared a small jug of water, ginger, and molasses, a drink which Richard greatly affected.

"Good-by," she said, kissing Letty; "mind you read your storybook and don't worry yourself. It may cheer you up to find how well the story ends after all the bad troubles are over, as good stories always do."

"I know the evil will all end in good — sometime," said Letty.

Faith was hardly out of hearing, and Letty, putting a caramel in her mouth, was reading the second page of her book, when she heard a sound in the next room—a shout, a groan, a rattle of half-articulate speech; father was awake. Then father began his usual Scripture quotations, than which nothing seemed to Letty more distressing, so much the letter of the Word differed from father's spirit and practice:—

“ ‘Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou on the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. They have stricken me, . . . and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again!’ Open this door and let me out! I will seek it yet again! That is according to Scripture! Sin is the cure of sin: like cures like—*similia similibus curantur*. If I could have made you two stupid girls good Latinists, you would know how to treat a gentleman and a scholar. Open this door! If the

whole sea were brandy, I could drink it up to quench this burning thirst!" and then followed a battery of kicks and blows.

Small chance for poor Letty now. The chocolate caramels lost their sweetness, the book failed to charm. She leaned back in her chair and tears rushed from under her closed eyelids. Then father was suddenly still, and in the pause of his exhaustion, sweet and clear as if some angel had stood by her side to utter them, sounded these words through Letty's shaken soul: "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. . . . Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us. . . . And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with

songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Thus the tossed spirit of the girl was tranquilized and she was lulled into rest. Still the silence in the next room—still the hum of bees, the rustle of long grasses, and the gentle lapping of the sea—and so she slept.

It was past noon when she awoke, aroused now by her father's voice, quiet and self-reproachful: "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool.' I am a fool. 'As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.' Letty!"

"Yes, father."

"I am once more in my right mind. The prodigal said, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.' You need not fear me any more now, Letty."

Letty rose, unlocked the door, carried father a pail of water, laid out fresh clothes. "Now, father, dress yourself while I make strong coffee for you, and we will have dinner together. Then you can sit by me or read to me while I work, and when it is sunset we will walk on the beach."

“Where is Faith?”

“Down by the rocks.”

“Ah! she can leave me, but you never do, my true-hearted Letty! Sometime Faith will go her own ways, but you will not; you and I will still be left together, Letty.”

“She will not leave us,” said Letty with a sigh. “I know my Faith. But some day, father, you and I, whose fate is bound together, may go away and leave Faith — free.”

Little Richard had gone home, and Faith, standing on the beach, was struggling between the duty of going back to solace Letty and the horror of hearing father’s ravings, when she saw the two coming quietly toward her — father clean, well-shaven, and neatly dressed, holding Letty by the hand as if she were a child. They sat down upon the sands.

“I am really sorry, Faith,” said Mr. Kemp, “that I forgot myself so seriously. I hope I have not done you any particular damage by it.”

“Not any more to me, father, than to Letty; you always harm Letty most by your drinking. I fly, but she keeps by you.”

“Has Mr. Julian been here to-day?”

“No, father. He has gone back to the city

and is going to stay there — and I'm glad of it. A girl in my circumstances finds friends too dangerous. I don't want any."

Father understood her. "Victor Hugo says," he remarked, "that in the human animal all other animals are present. Man is creation's crown, the climax of animal life, and in his quintessence we find the essence of all the lower animals — the lion, the cat, the toad, the hog, the fox, the hyena, and the donkey are all present in the man, and are evoked by different circumstances into more or less transient exhibition. Now when strong drink has rent away from my inner man the veil of conventionality, the educated habit, these lower brutes not only peer out, but come forth rampant, and overbear all the man-nature. It is terrible, and yet the study is curious. I often wish that as a psychological study my conscious better self could sit in observing judgment of my lower self when so unveiled. I should then be able the better to understand myself and perhaps apply a remedy."

Faith looked at her father intently. The man was undergoing a change of some kind. He had not usually come out of a drinking bout in just this way.

“Letty,” she said that night, when her father was safely asleep below and she and Letty had gone to bed, “there is a change coming over father. He recovers from his drunkenness much more quickly and fully than formerly, and, on the other hand, he returns to it much more quickly. Until now, drink has made him, in its first stage, timid, self-distrustful, dogged, but capable of doing what we told him. Then came outbreaks of fury with long sleeps or stupors between; then recovery, with humiliation, silence, and self-reproach, and perhaps a long period of abstinence. Now all that is changing. He comes out of his intoxication soon, self-asserting, unashamed, and goes back to it speedily. He is on the way to being drunk all the time. I tell you, Letty, if he becomes unmanageable and dangerous to you, I shall see to it that he is taken care of and that you are too.”

“How? What do you mean? What could you do?”

“We might leave father entirely and go to Uncle Wharton; but I think I could not do that.”

“I could not,” said Letty decidedly; “I must care for father.”

“The only way would be, as soon as Hugh is twenty-one and free to do as he pleases, to ask him to put father in an asylum and pay his expenses there. That would be Hugh’s fair part, now we have done our share. And you and I could live together here or near Hugh and take care of ourselves.”

“It would be so hard to have to do that with father: hard for Hugh, hard for father,” sighed Letty.

“All there is about it is hard,” said Faith; “but we should not wish to relieve Hugh of his due share of responsibility. He would be the better man for taking up duty, hard or easy. And you, Letty, have suffered enough; you shall not be further endangered by father.”

“The way I manage it,” said Letty quietly, “is to make the very best I can of every little quiet easy time that comes. Then I get up courage and strength for the hard times. Now father will be good for a while, and I shall keep my mind as easy as possible.”

In fact, father kept the peace for nearly three weeks, and Kenneth Julian did not reappear, so Letty felt as if she had come indeed to a lull in life, a very truce of God.

Then troubles came up again, swift as a summer thunderstorm. Since the time when father sold his clothes, Faith had kept the clothes locked up when the well-known danger signals were flying. It was now late in July, and Kenneth Julian was coming back for a week. Richard had brought the news.

“’Fore he went he told me when I heard mother say he was coming back to come up here and tell you, Miss Mermaid, and if I did it right, he’d bring me one pound of sugared almonds and nine packs of firecrackers. You’ll tell him I did it right, won’t you? I’m going to give you half the almonds, after I give mamma some, but I don’t guess you care much for the firecrackers — girls don’t ’most always.”

Thus the new Mercury carried messages between the gods.

The next day Kenneth would arrive, and Faith felt pretty sure he would be up the beach speedily. Perhaps she was glad of it. Faith was always the one to get the breakfast. She made Letty stay in bed until the meal was nearly ready.

“I ought to get it; I am the eldest, you know,” said Letty.

“Being the eldest, with a Faith and Hugh

younger but quite grown up, you have reached such venerable age that you must lie in bed in the mornings and rest."

And this morning when Faith came downstairs lo! the door of father's room was open, and father gone! His bed had not been slept in; and from the wall of the front room those three engravings, *The Angelus*, *The Return of the Mayflower*, and *Cupid in Vacation*, had vanished—gone with father, gone to buy drink! And Kenneth was coming, and he always called at the little house on the beach to shake hands with Letty and to bring her a bunch of flowers, a book of patterns, or a box of candy or a basket of fruit. He would see the vacant places on the wall; he would know what had happened!

At first Faith dropped into Letty's chair and cried heartily. Then she wiped her eyes and told herself that Letty must have a hot breakfast and so must she, and then she would have those pictures back.

She made great dispatch about breakfast. When Letty came down she gave a moan at hearing that father was gone, but, absorbed in him, she never noticed the loss of the pictures. Faith did not call her attention to it.

“I am going for Kiah Kibble,” said Faith, “and we will go to the town and hunt up father and bring him back. We must find out where he gets his liquor and put a stop to it. It will be fourteen months yet before Hugh can take care of father. Keep quiet here, Letty, and don’t worry. Kiah and I will see to the rest.”

That Kiah should give up a day’s work and devote himself to searching for his tenant seemed to him a matter of course. In Kiah’s opinion, time could not be better employed than in helping one’s neighbor. “I may not be so fortunate,” said Kiah, “as to live until that beautiful day when all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. I have always thought I should be so happy if I could be here on the earth until the Lord’s return, and be one of those caught up to meet him in the air. I fear that can’t be; but if I am not to live until that good time, there is no reason why I should not have as far as possible the manners of that time, and I make sure that then every man will live for the good of his neighbor. Keep up courage, Miss Faith. Along these ways that you and I now walk in trouble some day angels will walk, communing with men able to see such holy

creatures ; and there will be no more tired feet carrying heavy hearts, but only the ransomed of the Lord going on their errands with joy and singing."

Faith could not that sad morning take the comfort that Kiah did in these prognostications. She was younger, and her present trouble was heavy.

"Where are we to go, and what are we to do?" she asked Kiah.

"You'll go and sit in the railroad station, and I will go to the three saloons and find out pretty soon if your father has been there, and I'll find out if there is any person that they suspect of illegal liquor-selling. It is a crying injustice, Miss Faith, that any liquor-selling should be legal. The law ought to be for the betterment of the citizens, and not work out their destruction. As I take it, God is the only true fountain of law and of the authority of men over men, and the holy Bible is the pattern law book or statute book ; but I tell you, the race of men has got to be mightily perverted ! That is one thing that gives me courage. I think the measure of iniquity must be just about even full."

"And I think it has been heaped up and running over ever and ever so long !" cried Faith.

“Now, Kiah, I’ll go over to the station to wait for you ; but mind, I am not going home until I find my father and get back my pictures ; and I have some money with me, so that as soon as we do get father and the pictures we can take a carriage and drive back as far as your boathouse. If there is money needed, spend it ; I have some.”

“Go thy ways, child,” said Kiah kindly. “I too have brought money, and this much good I can get out of my earnings, that they shall be used to cure sorrow and rescue my neighbor.”

CHAPTER XIV.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"Hath wine an oblivious power?
Can it pluck the sting out of the brain?
The draught might beguile for an hour,
But it leaves behind it the pain."

FAITH sat for an hour in the station watching the coming and going of the passengers for the early train. Then Kiah returned.

"I have been to those three saloons, and am pretty sure that he has not been to them for drink."

"I would n't trust a word they say," replied Faith.

"One of them I am sure about, for he owes ten dollars there and can get nothing until it is paid. As for the other two, I feel pretty certain that he has not been there this time. They think that there is a successor to the negro's whiskey den somewhere, and they suspect the woman that keeps the hotel of selling, and she has no license. They are all interested in finding that out."

"Mrs. Batt, at the Worlo House!" cried Faith.

“A woman! Why, that can’t be so. A woman cannot be so horrid! besides I have seen her at the church, whenever I went there, singing in the choir.”

“She had better be out of the choir then, for the singing is a part of the worship of God, and only those should be in the choir who can praise God with both heart and voice. The fact is, Miss Faith, I believe it is this Mrs. Batt who has sold the liquor and has taken your pictures.”

“Wait a minute until I think,” said Faith.

Next door to the Worlo House, kept by Mrs. Batt, was the house of the woman who owned the store where Faith occasionally bought fancywork materials when her supply from the city ran short. This Mrs. Gaines was a shrill-voiced, hard-dealing woman, and sometimes when she was away from the shop her place was taken by a young girl — a thin, sad, overtaxed creature, a niece of Mrs. Gaines, who “worked for her keep,” she told Faith. Faith had been drawn to sympathize with this girl whose lot seemed hard, and on the few occasions when she had seen her she had spoken cheerily and kindly to her, and the girl, Nan, seemed to appreciate it; such little attentions were not frequent in her experience. Faith now

began to reason: "Living next to the Worlo House, Nan Gaines will probably know something of what goes on there. She likes me, and she would tell me what she thought I needed to know. Mrs. Gaines is such a hard mistress that probably she makes Nan rise very early, and so Nan may have seen my father if he went early to the Worlo House."

She concluded to make an errand into Mrs. Gaines' store to see if Nan were there. If Mrs. Gaines were in charge, then Nan would be at the house with only a child or two, and Faith could go there to question her. Opposite the Worlo House was a small fruit shop, and she proposed that Kiah should go there and wait for her while she prosecuted her inquiries.

Nan was not at the shop, so Faith went to the house and, going round the back way, found the girl cleaning up the kitchen. She asked her for a drink and spoke kindly to her for a few minutes. Then:—

"You are very close to the hotel, Nan."

"Closer than I want to be."

"Does Mrs. Batt sell liquor?"

"There's no telling what *she* does."

"Do you suppose she is a woman who would

sell liquor and take things like household property or books or pictures as pay for it?"

"I don't know. I don't reckon there's any mean trick she'd be above doing. I just hate her! She flaunts around in her silk and feathers and flowers, as large as life, and she speaks to me and looks at me as if I was a dog. I've got feelings, if I am poor. She's no license to sell, and if she does it on the sly, I just wish they'd find her out and fine her; that's what I do!"

"Were you up early this morning?"

"I'm always up with the chickens, or before them."

"Did you" — Faith flushed and hesitated — "see this morning early, or late last night — any stranger going in there — with a parcel?"

"There's always strangers with parcels going into hotels," said Nan, looking keenly at poor Faith.

Faith stood silent.

Nan was not born to *finesse* and she had no refinements of education. She was rough because she had been roughly brought up; as for Faith, she felt kindly to her, and would be glad to do her a service. Also, she would be doubly glad to do Mrs. Batt an injury. She spoke out roundly: —

“See here, miss, once or twice I saw you in town here with a man, an oldish man — I don’t mean Kiah Kibble, the boatbuilder; I know him; he gives me tracts sometimes; but another man, tall and rather handsome, and gentleman style, and looks as if he drank. Saw you come out of the drug store with him once, and he was talking mad like. Is that your father?”

Faith nodded. Oh, this was a hard errand that she had to do!

“I say, you won’t never, never tell that I set you on the track of it, will you? You know I’m only a poor girl, with no folks to stand up for me if people gets mad at me; and Mrs. Batt will be just raving, and she and Aunt Gaines are pretty thick.”

“I will not refer to you at all as having told me anything.”

“Well, then, — come round here, Mrs. Batt may see us talking, — I was out sweeping the walk ’bout four o’clock this morning and I saw that very man — your father — slipping in behind the hotel with a right smart-sized jug in one hand, and under his arm a biggish bundle in a newspaper; looked to me just like picters, and I says to myself: ‘There’s a man carrying off things

from his home as he has no business to carry off, and if he's that sweet-spoken, pretty young lady's pa,' I says, 'just as like as not it's some of her things old Batt's getting.'"

Faith gave a sob. "But so early! he could not get in then."

"I reckon he hung round the carriage house till 'bout six, and then old Mrs. Batt's up, and he could bargain for his truck. It's my idea that he slept in the carriage house 'bout three weeks ago, when he got too full to go home. He did break out then, did n't he?"

Oh! the misery of this shameful investigation!

"Thank you for telling me all that you have," said Faith. "I will go out by the side gate so that Mrs. Batt may not see me and trouble you."

"Hateful old thing!" said Nan. But this adjective "old" was just used to express her dislike, for in fact Mrs. Batt was not yet of middle age.

Faith went over to the fruit store and she and Kiah walked up the street for private conversation. "He has been getting his liquor at the Worlo House. He had a jugful this morning. I don't know where he is drinking it; but he brought the pictures."

"What shall we do now to get them, and then to find him?"

“The simplest way seems to me best,” said Faith. “Let us go straight to the hotel parlor and ask for Mrs. Batt.”

Faith’s courage had now risen to the situation. That this bold bad woman should have the pictures which Kenneth had given her was intolerable. They walked quietly into the Worlo House and asked for the proprietress. In marched Mrs. Batt in a pink wrapper trimmed with lace; her hair was much befrizzed, and she wore long earrings.

“Good-morning, Mr. Kibble! It *is* Mr. Kibble, I think; I’ve seen you pass. Is the young lady looking for board?”

“No,” said Faith, erect, calm, firm; “I am looking for some of my property — these three pictures which hang here on your wall. You took them this morning from my father for a jug of whiskey. You must have known that he had no more right to sell the pictures *than you had to sell the liquor*. The pictures belong to me and my sister. I’ll trouble you to take them down and give them to Mr. Kibble. We came for them.”

Mrs. Batt’s voice rose to a shrill scream of rage. “Get out of here, both of you! The pictures are mine! I bought them in Boston six months ago. Go out, or I’ll have you put out!”

“The pictures are mine, and had my name and my sister’s in pencil on the back. Have you rubbed them out? I can prove property. I will not go without them. If you have us put out, we will come in at once with a constable and complain of you for selling liquor without a license.”

“Complain all that you like ; but go !”

“See here, Mrs. Batt, the easiest way will be to give up the pictures,” said Kiah, reaching down one from the wall. “Here is the young lady’s name — Faith — on the back. Will you give them to us, or shall I stand guard over them, while she runs for a constable?”

“I must also know,” said Faith, “if my father is drinking his liquor on your premises, for I must take him away.”

“He is n’t here,” said Mrs. Batt. “I don’t allow low, broken-down old toppers, such as he is, hanging round my house ! I should think you’d be ashamed to claim him ; but probably you are used to it, and not above it. You look so. As for the pictures, they are cheap wretched things. I don’t care for them anyway. Take them.” And opening a closet door Mrs. Batt picked up the very paper and string in which Ralph Kemp

had brought the pictures, and handed them to Kiah.

Kiah took down the pictures, folded them up, and said: "Come, Faith." But when they were in the street he gave her the pictures and told her to wait while he went around and searched the back premises to see if her father were there.

"I think he must have gone away, as she said," he reported when he returned and took possession of the pictures. "Let us move along this way. It is now after eleven. I will stop in the little grocery at the fork of the road and buy us something to eat, and perhaps they can tell me which way your father went. It is my opinion that Mrs. Batt made him take his jug away, and he has gone somewheres to drink it at leisure."

When Kiah came out of the little grocery, bringing a package of eatables, he said: "They saw your father going across to those pine woods about half-past seven o'clock. That is not much out of our way. I think we may find him there."

Those were beautiful woods, and this was a beautiful day. The hot sun smote the pines and drew from them rich aromatic odors; the reddish pine needles made a soft, elastic carpet, and through the trees the sunshine sifted, flecking

the earth with light. The pine woods were very still in this hot noon ; there was no sound but the ceaseless whisper of the pines, the click of falling needles or cones, and the light patter of squirrels' feet running along the branches, while tap, tap, tap, from a distance, came a woodpecker's drumming on a tree. Oh, how sweet and lovely and soothing is nature, drawing our hearts by her restful calms ! What a contrast to the passion-tossed life of humanity is this sweet growth and quiet of the woods !

Faith, overworn by her morning of distressful excitement, sank back upon a cushion of pine needles, leaned against a tree, and took off her hat to let the fragrant breeze cool her flushed unhappy face. Her breath came in little panting sobs ; she looked utterly desolate.

Kiah laid down his parcels without a word, and with a little tin pail he had bought at the grocery went to hunt up a spring.

"I don't see nor hear anything of your father," he said as he came back ; "but first of all, Miss Faith, you must eat a little something. You are tired out, and food will give you strength and courage for all that is to come. Keep up heart ! We have your pictures, and soon we'll have

your father. I haven't anything very good to offer you. All I could get yonder was cheese and crackers and gingersnaps and a little can of tongue. Try and eat a bite, Miss Faith."

At first Faith felt as if she could not take a mouthful; but that hurt Kiah's feelings, so she ate, and then found that she was very hungry, and was all the better for eating.

When the meal was over Kiah proposed that Faith should rest where she was, and he should explore the wood for her father. But when Kiah was out of sight inaction seemed dreadful to Faith, and she started up to investigate on her own account. She went hither and thither, searching vainly, and at last stopped, not far from a huge pile of brush, the trimmings of trees that had been cut up for firewood. As she stood there, deeply discouraged, she felt as if some one were watching her, and her eyes were presently drawn toward a place in the brush heap where she saw a pair of eyes, and part of a face, regarding her from the further side of the pile. This must be her father. She went straight around the heap.

There sat her father. After his first dram he had gone to sleep, as he had not been in bed all night. He had roused, and been drinking a little

more, but carefully, as he purposed taking the day for it. He sat against the stump of the destroyed pine, and the fatal jug was near him. He said not a word as Faith drew near and knelt down beside him.

“Father!”

Infinite sorrow and reproach in her tone and face.

“Go away, child. You are too far from home. Why are you here?”

“To take what is my own,” said Faith. “The liquor in this jug is mine. You paid for it with my pictures.”

“Nonsense, girl! It is not fit for women — nor for men who know how to rule their appetites. To me it is a necessity.”

“I can do what I will with my own,” said Faith masterfully; and rising to her feet she seized the jug with a quick motion and whirled it against a big boulder lying near.

“Gir’!” cried her father angrily. “Now I shall have to go for more.”

“You will not go for more,” said Faith, bending toward him. “I will help you against the demon that is destroying you. Come home to good little Letty. Just think how badly she feels for you to-day.”

“I shall never go home again. I shall only make you two miserable, and carry off everything that you have.”

“Then I will go and get the things back; as I have the pictures.”

“You got back the pictures?” said the father, having the grace to blush.

“Yes, I did; and you can get no more whiskey at the Worlo House. Where will you try next, father?”

“Faith, I hate you!”

“Not when you are sober, father. Come, go home with me. Think how comfortable Letty and I make you sometimes. Think of the night my mother died. Do you remember, she prayed for you, and she asked you to promise to be good to the children? You said yes.”

“But I have been bad to you ever since! I have lied to the dead.”

“And you repent of that? You can be forgiven.” Faith had knelt down again, her hand on her father’s knee. “Listen, father! Let us pray for you; let us ask God for help, and you will be helped.”

“You may pray all you like,” said Ralph; “it can neither help nor hinder me. The fact is,

Faith, as I have said before, I am where *I don't care*. Conscience is dead; my love for you children is nearly dead; my memory of your mother, of my mother, is nearly dead also. Can such dry bones live?"

"Yes: by the breath of God's Spirit. Bow your head, father; you *must* pray."

"It is of no use," said Ralph; but he bent his head and listened, and the sobbing prayer of the daughter may have been of some use, for when it was ended he suffered her to take him by the hand and lead him away, and so they met Kiah Kibble coming from a vain search in the wood.

Kiah proposed that Kemp should have some of the luncheon that was left. At first Ralph refused, then consented, and ate while Kiah brought him the quart pail full of water. He drank half of it and rinsed his face and head with the remainder.

"Come," he said quietly, "let us go home; your sister will be wondering where you are. It must be some time after noon."

"It is half-past one," said Kiah.

Father gave a glance at the large parcel of the pictures under Kiah's arm, but made no comment.

The next day Kenneth called at the little house,

while Ralph sat reading to his daughters. He remained chatting pleasantly for about an hour, and then asked Faith to walk on the beach with him.

Faith avoided Letty's eyes, which would say "No," and reached for her hat. Was not yesterday enough of misery? Why should she not have a little pleasure in her life to-day?

"I am glad those pictures were on the wall," said father to Letty when Faith and Kenneth had passed down the beach.

"They came near not being there, father."

"Yes: I'll tell you, Letty, what I wish. I wish you and Faith would go off and save yourselves while you can, and leave me to take my own chances. I'm too much trouble to you, and I never shall be anything else. I'm not worth your worrying about — and who knows how much worse I shall be some day? You can't understand the tyranny of appetite. You feel as if I could stop when I wanted to. It is not in me. If you girls will just go and leave me, I'll promise you solemnly never to go near you or trouble you."

"We don't want any such promise, father. We want to do our duty. I promised mother; I must keep my word."

“When a person is a victim of the drink mania,” said her father coolly, “he cares no more for his word than for a burnt straw. As for this stickling for truth, for a word, have you observed, Letty, that the old pagans had very little regard for that kind of honor? I think, on the whole, this scrupulosity for promise-keeping is a very commercial kind of virtue — the outgrowth of the shop-keeping character.”

“Faith should be here to argue that with you, father,” said Letty.

A few days after this the father and his two daughters walked over to the boatbuilder’s shop, after supper.

Kiah brought out his violin and proposed that they should have a little music. While this was going on, a girl came walking swiftly up the beach. She looked hot, angry, miserable; she had been crying, and had a bundle in her arms. It was Nan Gaines.

“I got into trouble for what I told you, miss,” she said, throwing her bundle down at Faith’s feet. “That old Batt had seen you talking to me — or some of her servants had, and she set on my aunt to charging me with it, and she scolded me for an hour, and then when I said my tongue

was my own, she slapped me and said I should n't stay there another hour. She will want me back to-morrow, but I won't go. I've slaved long enough for her. But it is just on the edge of evening, and I had nowhere to go, so I did up my bundle and came to you."

Faith looked aghast at this incident. What could she and Letty do with Nan, in their poverty and with father's vagaries?

But Kiah interferred: "See here, child, these young ladies have no room and no money, but I can take you in. I have an old woman to keep my house, but she is not much at sewing, and she's no company. I'll take you for a daughter, if you like to try it. I think I shall like at last to hear One say, 'I was a stranger, and ye took me in.'"

CHAPTER XV.

LETTY TO THE RESCUE.

“If on my theme I rightly think,
There are five reasons why men drink:
Good wine, a friend, because I'm dry,
Or any other reason why.”

IT is one of the saddest things in a world where much is sad, to see a family upon the down grade, each year, each month marking the decadence of the home and the degradation of the individuals. To see a family rising to better and better things, the children reaching wider influence and deeper knowledge and better position than their parents have had — this is harmonious with general human progress, and is a comfortable spectacle. Toward this, with concerted intention, all the members of families should aim; it should be part of the family projects, freely discussed by old and young.

There was none of this cheering improvement in the house on the beach; each semester saw family affairs showing a little darker for Ralph Kemp and his daughters. The two girls now

never knew when their father would indulge himself; his drinking had now no periodicity which could be relied upon. Under stress of this constant watchfulness, the sisters began to look anxious and careworn.

About six miles from the boatbuilder's house, there was a pretty rural ground where a yearly camp meeting was held, and to go there for a week, listen to the sermons and share in the singing and prayers, was the great treat of Kiah Kibble's life. This year his old housekeeper went also, and Nan, who had settled herself very comfortably as a part of Kiah's family, was left to keep house for herself and the little boy. Nan often came over to see the sisters; she considered them her friends, and was loyally attached to them, while as part of her friendship she discussed their affairs with a distressing frankness, of the unpleasantness of which she was not at all aware.

The second morning of Kiah's absence Nan came running up the beach, evidently with something to communicate. Letty went out to meet her. Father had disappeared before his daughters awoke. What was to Letty even worse, as newer and more unexpected, Faith was unable to rise,

having a terrible headache and considerable fever. Faith had not spent a day in bed for four years, and Letty was proportionately anxious.

“I shall be all right to-morrow,” said Faith. “Darken the room, Letty, and let me keep quiet. It is nothing, and you know just what to do for me.”

She did not inquire about her father; perhaps in the severity of her pain she forgot him; perhaps she did not wish to know of an evil which she could not help.

Letty, on her part, said nothing, but having made her sister as comfortable as she could, and placed a cooling drink near her hand, went down to her work at the lower room window. When she saw Nan, she went out to meet her.

“What is the matter? Have you any bad news? Speak softly, for my sister is sick in bed.”

“I should say I had bad news! And Miss Faith laid up! I don’t know then what you *will* do! Nothing, I reckon, for of course you can’t get along as she can.”

“But what is it, Nan — about father?”

“Of course. Is n’t it always about him? You two would get on well enough if it was n’t for

him. A boy named Carson came up from the village to fish to-day, and he was getting clams for bait near the boathouse, and he told me your father was drinking in at Jeffers' saloon. He said the last time he got drunk there the men teased him, and he got mad and threw a bottle through the window and made a big fuss; and Jeffers said, sure as he was a living man, if he acted like that there again, he'd have him arrested and put in jail for a month. You girls would feel mighty bad about that, wouldn't you? And so would your father, for when he's not in liquor he's a mighty big-feeling gentleman."

"And he is at Jeffers' again?" gasped Letty.

"Yes; t' other two places won't let him have any. Hill promised Mr. Kibble that he wouldn't, and he owes at the other place. The Carson boy says your father is drinking, and the men tease him and call him 'president' and 'professor' and try to get him to talk Latin and Greek. By noon he'll get rampageous, and first you know he will be in jail. I reckoned maybe Miss Faith would go over and bring him home, but of course you can't do anything."

"If I were near him, I could manage him better than she can."

“But you can’t walk over there.”

Letty looked about. There, going toward the hotel, was the grocer’s cart. It passed some distance above her house, and after calling at the hotel returned to the town. When they needed any supplies for the house, she or Faith went up to the beach to where the cart crossed, and spoke to the grocer. He was a friendly young fellow, and Letty was sure he would take her back to town with him, if she went up and waited for him at the crossing.

“I will go to town with Barry,” she said, “if I can stop him at the crossway. Nan, will you sit quietly in the house until I come back, and only go to Faith or speak to her if she calls? Maybe she will fall asleep and know nothing of this. She was awake nearly all night. I’ll get back from town some way.”

“All right,” said Nan cordially. “I will bring you your hat and cape from the house, and I’ll go to the crossroad with you; you can walk easier if I take you along by the arm as your sister does.”

Having reached Barry’s cart in time, Letty soon was riding to the village beside the grocer. He tried to be agreeable and chatted, but poor

Letty's heart was so heavy she could scarcely answer him. She was ashamed to tell where she was going, or for what, but trusted to find her way to the saloon after she had been left at the druggist's, where she bought something for Faith.

As saloons are generally blatantly established upon the public way, Letty had not far to go before she saw the sign, BILL JEFFERS, and peeping through the window, there at a table was her father, intoxicated, in a heated discussion, angry, flushed; other men who were drinking listening with a jeering look; while Jeffers from behind the bar seemed on the watch for mischief. The door of the saloon was open and Letty heard plainly the subject of her father's harangue; she had heard it before; it was not new to her: he discussed the ethics of Aristotle. Terrified, not at her father, but at his comrades, Letty stole into the dreaded saloon. Short as a child, but with long dress and hair done up behind like a woman, her face piteous and terrified as a child's, but careful and grave as a woman's, Letty, whom none of these men had ever seen before, attracted instant attention.

"Well, young one, what do you want?" demanded Jeffers.

“I want my father,” said Letty, going straight toward Ralph.

“Now see here!” bawled Jeffers, “it’s one of my set rules not to have no kids nor women folks coming here after men. This is my place, and when the men gets done drinking their folks can wait for ’em outside.”

“I’ll take him right away,” said Letty hurriedly. “I was afraid if he stayed he might quarrel, and I heard that you said you would send him to jail.”

“So I will, if he breaks any more windows or raises a row.”

“I’ll take him out, and I wish, please, you’d never sell him any more, for then when he gets it he does n’t know what he is doing.”

Jeffers laughed loudly. “If that ain’t cool! I sell it to all that brings me their money. Cash sure is my rule.”

Letty had drawn near her father. She took the glass from between his hands and touched his shoulder, saying gently, “Come now, dear, you and I will go home.”

“Letty! why are you here? This is no place for a girl. Go home at once! Why are you meddling with me? You take too much on your-

self, girl! The Roman women always remained in the privacy of their own homes. Go away, I say! I won't be watched and managed by you two girls! It is just disgraceful!"

His voice was loud and fierce, he gesticulated wildly, and all the men laughed. But there was one way in which Letty could always quiet her father and reduce him to submission like a tamed wild beast. She had the face and the voice of her father's mother. Her voice, if she had been left to her normal development like Faith, would have been powerful, but now it was, while not strong, yet unusually sweet and true. Perhaps its tones brought back the mother love of old, the boyish reverence and devotion, for when Letty sang to him her father was always conquered. She thought nothing of the rude men standing about; she thought only of her father and how she must take him away and save him from himself. She took both his resisting tremulous hands in hers and with her eyes fixed on his began to sing:—

“ While I on earth abide,
 Light of the world,
Be thou my only Guide,
 Light of the world.
Danger alone I see,
No hand outstretched to me,
Save when I turn to thee,
 Light of the world!

I have been lured away,
 Light of the world,
Far from thy paths to stray,
 Light of the world,
Like a bark tempest-tossed,
Rudder and compass lost,
Till thy beam o'er me crossed,
 Light of the world!

There is an angel band,
 Light of the world,
Close by thy throne they stand,
 Light of the world,
They sing the song of praise,
Join in the heavenly lays,
There I my voice would raise,
 Light of the world!"

Father was now weeping like a child. Perhaps this "seemed to him like his mother's voice singing in Paradise." He looked at Letty. "Take me away with you, little girl. Take me away. There is fire within and fire all around me, and these faces here look at me like fiends from the pit. Take me away."

Father was not the only one weeping. Silence had fallen on the saloon, glasses were set down, tears were on rough faces.

Jeffers resented this situation. "Here, get out of this!" he said in a threatening voice, coming from his bar. "I don't keep no dime museum or

monkey show for dwarfs or giantesses, or Salvation Army singing. You clear out!"

"How dare you speak so to my child!" shouted Ralph furiously.

"You wind up, Jeffers; you sha'n't have it all your own way here," cried a herculean fellow, seizing Jeffers by the shoulders. "Now hold your tongue or I'll give you a bat that won't be good for you. Sit down there in your bar, tend to your glasses, and don't you move or speak. We are going to have some more singing. We don't often get a treat like this. Kemp, your little girl is all right; you just keep still and let her stand beside you; she is going to sing to us poor wretches. Start in, little one; we don't often hear about that Light, or anything else that's very good."

Letty trembled inwardly, but dared not refuse. Besides, she suddenly thought that this might be a call to do some service for her Lord. Letty felt as if she were a helpless little person who could serve him very little. She began to sing again:—

"O Paradise! O Paradise!

Who doth not crave for rest?

Who would not seek that happy land

Where they that loved are blest?

Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.

O Paradise! O Paradise!
The world is growing old;
Who would not be at rest and free
Where love is never cold?
Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight."

One more hymn she sang, but dared not linger longer. The music might lose its effect and her father would become rebellious.

"I am tired," she said. "I must go now. I wish you would not let my father come here any more." And she led Ralph away. The men watched her going off, holding her unsteady father by the hand.

"She'll never get him home," said Luke Folsom, who had come in. "She is n't strong enough to walk two miles and a half on sandy roads. And just like enough Kemp will get drowsy going at that gait and will lie down and sleep for hours."

"Let us cross over and meet them as they get out of town, and take them home. Two of us can

get Kemp along and two of us can cross hands and carry her," said Letty's big champion.

This proposition was received as a flash of genius. They did not stop to consider whether this help would or would not be welcome to Letty. They concluded that she positively could not get along without it, and perhaps she could not. Letty, less used than Faith to affairs, had set off from home without any money. She was terrified when she saw the four men coming up. They were not drunk, but had all been drinking. They were strangers, all but Luke Folsom, whom she disliked greatly; were they come to persuade father to go back to the saloon?

"We're going to help you home, little one," said the big man heartily, "and we don't mean to let Jeffers sell any more drink to your dad: 't ain't fair to such a little gal as you are. Now you can't foot it in this deep sand; you look ready to drop now. Luke and me will cross hands and make a princess chair for you, and the other two will help your father along right smart, and we'll get you home in no time. All we ask is that you'll sing while we take you along. You sing plumb like a bird."

How thankful Letty was that they went round

by the beach and met no one but Kiah Kibble's boy and his fishing friend, the boy Carson, as she was taken home in this kind of state! Her voice trembled, but she sang away bravely, "Rock of Ages," "Abide with Me," and "Come, ye Disconsolate." As boys whistle to keep their courage up when they walk through the wood at night, so Letty sang partly to keep her courage up, and her hymns were prayers.

At last they were within sight of home.

"Won't you please let us go on alone now?" she said. "My sister is sick, and I'm afraid if you go up to the house, it may frighten her and make her worse. Thank you; you have been very kind."

The curious cortége at once came to a halt, and took leave very quietly. Father was soon sent to bed, Faith was found in a comfortable sleep, and Nan had prepared a nice tea-dinner for herself and Letty.

It was only a day or two after, when the sisters were at their work and father had been persuaded to sit down and make a hammock, that Kenneth Julian came in.

"I'm only here for a day," he said. "I came on business this time for my uncle. How are you all?"

“Well,” said the sisters quietly.

“I am *not* well,” said father calmly, “because I have not been doing well. There is no need for me to try to deceive you, Mr. Julian, and I don’t care to do it. You know indulgence in drink is my besetting sin ; and have you not observed, my young friend, that it is often the most gifted of men who become slaves of drink? The fine scholar, the handsome genial boy, the universal favorite, fall. I wonder how you have escaped! And often the nobler the gifts, the deeper the degradation. Let me call to the minds of you young people a few notable instances. How many tears have been shed over Robert Burns! What a genius was there! what love of nature! what tenderness, what sympathy! In much he was like David, the singer of Israel. The shepherd and the plowman, sweet lyrists both! But Burns yielded to the allurements of drink and perished miserably. John Logan, author of some of the finest Scottish hymns, minister in the town of Leith, drank himself to death at the age of forty-four. I am told that in the penny or two-penny lodgings and the police lodgings in London, men who have been distinguished lawyers, doctors, and preachers, first-class graduates of Oxford and

Cambridge, are nightly found. I have cried, as a lad, over Charles Lamb, little thinking that I should have his fate, but not his fame. Where was there a brighter scholar, a more subtle genius, than Hartley Coleridge, brilliant son of a brilliant father? but he too went down to ruin before the demon of strong drink. You can match him with Edgar Allan Poe, singer and sot. Faith would place beside these DeQuincey and S. T. Coleridge, drunkards on opium. Over how many premature graves can be written, Destroyed by drink! As Marius sat musing on the ruins of Carthage, so I sit in spirit by that great grave where yearly sixty thousand victims of strong drink are laid, and I wonder much why men are born to die in this way, and why men are to be found to beguile brother men to their ruin. My young friends, this is a terrible mystery."

Father was yet in that *état exalté* which with him succeeded the indulgence in liquor. Alas for this father—a man of culture, who had pursued learning as an end, and exalted the higher part of his nature, bearing eloquent testimony to the superiority of the intellectual over the physical! What had now become of his testimony? He sat there a terrible example of the vices that he deprecated.

As the father talked, well but with prolixity, a deep and lasting lesson was borne in on the mind of Kenneth Julian. Surely nothing but the grace of God can stay the tempted soul or help the erring one to rise superior to the dominance of depraved appetite. Social status, the love of family, the blessings of a refined, cultivated type of life, highest intellectual training — all fall powerless; only that protection is assured and impregnable which comes from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

The calls of Kenneth on the sisters were often seasons of joyous laughter and merry jest, but to-day deep despondency seemed to brood over them all. The remarks of father on a sin of which he was a lamentable example did not serve to enliven his auditors. Letty with mechanical precision drew gold and silver thread in and out of green satin stretched upon a frame. Faith pulled threads for drawn work, and the wind coming in at the open door bore the vagrant shreds here and there; but no play of happiness flitted across the faces of Ralph Kemp's daughters.

CHAPTER XVI.

SHE FOUGHT WITH DRAGONS.

“What magnified monsters circle therein,
Ragged and stained with filth and mud,
Some plague-spotted and some with blood,
Shapes of misery, pain, and sin.”

FAITH KEMP thought that she had a pretty hard battle to fight in life. She daily found need for all the patience and courage which she could command. It was hard enough to endure, and sometimes enduring requires more valor than doing. But the time came to Faith when she had to gather up valor for more than enduring, and instead of foes without she had to encounter strong temptation, foes from within, and it is on these fields of inner strife that we fight our hardest battles and achieve our finest victories.

“I wish,” said Letty one morning to Faith, “that Mr. Julian would stop coming here. The times when he comes this summer are so irregular, and father is so very uncertain in his ways, too, that I am in constant terror for fear a visitor

should come in and find our poor father in one of his worst states. I wish he would n't come !”

“You can't wish it any more than I do,” said Faith. “I have been so mortified and distracted by things that have happened here with father that it seems to me as if I should be one of the most thankful persons in the world if we might be left here in quiet and never see a human face except each other's.”

“And Hugh,” said Letty.

“Not Hugh either,” insisted Faith. “I don't yearn to have the poor dear boy come here for misery and mortification like ours.”

“I don't think Mr. Julian will stop coming,” said Letty. “He cares more for you than as a mere friend ; I can see it.”

“Well, I don't care for him. I don't care for any one but you, Letty. I've been miserable and ashamed until I nearly hate every one else in the world. It is dreadful to live in such an unchristian frame of mind ;” and Faith began to cry.

If Faith were in an unchristian frame and far from a temper of holy charity, Kenneth, on the contrary, was more and more inclined to love his neighbor fully as well as himself, and this knowledge pressed upon him ; and, like the divisions

of Reuben in Deborah's time, it caused "great searchings of heart." When Kenneth pictured to himself how happy he might be with the charming Faith for his wife, he would have desired nothing better than to go to the house on the beach and ask her to share his fortunes. When he went up there and saw Faith's lovely face constantly growing sadder and more weary; when he noted that the stress upon her of her father's irregularities was making her nervous and care-worn; when he saw how sordid were her surroundings and the circumstances of her daily life, while all her tastes were for what was refined and beautiful and pure, — he felt as if he must take her far away from all that was so hard and bitter and place her where all should be bright and pleasant. He did not so much question whether Faith would go; her position at present seemed to him so distressful that he did not see how she could bring herself to endure it at all.

But when Kenneth looked at his own situation he found much to trouble him. The home where he lived belonged equally to Patty and himself. He hardly felt justified in setting up an independent establishment at the beginning of his business life. For twenty years Uncle Doctor had

had his home with his wards, who had become to him as his own children. To disturb the old man and make him unhappy in his home would be a poor recompense for a life of faithfulness and kindness. Kenneth felt that his home must be Uncle Doctor's as long as the good but opinionated old gentleman should live. He told himself that a household established on strife, injustice, or ingratitude would not be a household that could rest under the benediction of God. To think of setting up a home where "father" should be an inmate was impossible. What should be done with "father"? The idea of an asylum crossed Kenneth's mind; that might be the best place for him. And Letty? Well, Letty could share Faith's home; but Kenneth realized that Uncle Doctor would rise in arms if he proposed taking a wife and inaugurating domestic life by putting a father-in-law in an asylum and bringing home a dwarfed sister. Uncle Doctor had a singular adoration of beauty, and Kenneth had relied on that trait to make him favorable to Faith. At the same time, until he had had experience of the beauty of her character, it would make him very unfavorable to Letty. Uncle Doctor was stubborn to a degree; he was full of queer conceits,

and at his first hearing of Faith he had taken a violent prejudice against all that regarded her.

“It is these hasty, unequal marriages, Kenneth,” said Uncle Doctor, “that have brought upon our land the shame and evil of divorce and the crying iniquity of the marriage of divorced people. God is the God of covenant-keeping, and the marriage covenant is in his eyes particularly sacred. Men and women vow at God’s altars to love and cherish until death parts them, and presently they are before the civil tribunal asking for divorce — on grounds of incompatibility! Why are they incompatible? They were incompatible when they married, and they might have known it. There was nothing in their tempers or habits of life or opinions to make them compatible, but they married on the impulse of the hour, urged by fleeting fancy, by whim, and they called on God to ratify the vows based on whims — and then appealed to men to put asunder what God had joined. The land is full of the scandal of broken homes, of children half orphaned, but not by death; of households quarrelling about property and the custody of minors — open and public desecration of the home instead

of charity and the fear of God keeping watch at the hearthstone. You tell me, and your aunt and Patty tell me, that you have taken a great fancy to some fisher's girl up at the beach."

"I never said a fancy, uncle — I love the girl sincerely."

"You think you do, no doubt; but what have you to base love on — a face that looks to you pretty now, because it is fresh and young; a pleasant day or two by the sea, when you had everything about you to make you merry and easily satisfied? That will not afford a basis for a love that must weather sickness, anxiety, age, possibly poverty, and unusual trials. You would bring to your home a girl without education or cultivation or the habits of the life you live, and you would find her unfitted for that life. When the first glamour of your fancy wore off, you would find her discontented, incapable of taking an equal place among your friends, and you would be ashamed of her and blame her for your mortification, and your love would prove not love but an idle fleeting fancy, and would turn to weariness and dislike. Do you understand the great injustice you would do her?"

"You are all out, uncle; you don't understand

the matter at all. Faith is not only remarkably beautiful, as Aunt Parvin can tell you, but she is admirably well educated and well read, and very refined and lovely, and gracious in her ways. I don't know any young lady as much so. As for her family, she is of good family — she is Hugh Kemp's sister and Mr. Tom Wharton's niece."

Kenneth had been driven to this statement. Whereupon Uncle Doctor took occasion to make acquaintance with Mr. Wharton and, not mentioning his nieces, but turning the conversation upon Hugh, he was presently treated to a tirade against Ralph Kemp, as a fiend in human shape, a creature guilty of the most enormous follies, the most reckless and selfish, weak and shameless of mortals. There was no pity for Ralph Kemp in Tom Wharton's soul — no sympathy, no comprehension of his temptations, no understanding of his sufferings. The two men had never in any way harmonized, and Tom Wharton had a deep rage cherished in his soul, because of his sister's sorrows and early death, all of which he charged, and no doubt very rightly, to her husband's account.

Now when Uncle Doctor had heard this discussion of Ralph Kemp and his misdeeds, he was more resolutely opposed to Faith than ever, and

lectured his nephew roundly upon meditating entanglements with any such person.

Kenneth, being by no means a headstrong or reckless young man, took council with himself that waiting patience might be the most available aid he could secure. In another year Hugh Kemp would be free from his promise to his uncle. Then he could shut up his father where he would be safe from himself, and the two sisters could be brought to the city. If they did not live with their uncle, they could have a home with their brother, and Kenneth was sure that when once Uncle Doctor saw Faith, and realized the loveliness of her character and manners and the excellence of her education, he would be well content.

"I feel that I owe to Uncle Doctor all the deference that I would pay to a father. He has acted like a father to us, and I've seen many fathers quite as stubborn as he is," said Kenneth to his sister.

"Yes," said Patty, laughing; "queer as it may seem to us, parents *do* sometimes hold opinions contrary to those of their children! Why don't you inveigle Uncle Doctor to going to the beach with you, and let the acquaintance of the young lady reconcile him to the affair?"

“I ’d be worse off than ever, Patty,” said Kenneth. “He would be as hard on poor Mr. Kemp as Mr. Wharton is, and then you know Uncle Doctor’s whims ; he ’d take a dislike to poor little Letty, and she is the dearest little soul.”

“Well, all right ; wait a while,” said Patty, who, despite her sisterly sympathies, was less interested in the subject than her brother was ; “but whatever you do, Ken, don’t forget that the Fifth Commandment takes in Uncle Doctor, for he is all the father you have.”

“I mean to remember it,” said Kenneth.

And so he did. But sometimes a very little affair overthrows our best intentions. And moreover, Kenneth might have held that it was not a little affair at all to stroll up the beach to see Faith, and nearly an eighth of a mile from her house to hear yells and vociferations and vituperations, and to get sight through the window of Letty, her face hidden in her hands, weeping miserably, and then, as he quietly passed round the house, intent on going to Kiah Kibble to ask what this all meant, to find Faith crouched down in the long grasses behind a clump of beach-plum bushes, her head bowed to her lap, sobbing as if her heart would break.

When Mr. Kemp, locked in his room, broke forth in a storm of maniacal rage, extraordinary even for him, Faith simply could not stay in the house to hear it. If she fled as aforesaid to her grotto, Richard or some other might there intrude upon her misery. No one ever thought of crossing the tangle on the dune, and so she fled there, and, abandoning herself to her woe, stopping her ears to shut out that terrible din from the house, she knew nothing of approaching footsteps, until Kenneth was beside her.

On his part, Kenneth had no idea of seeing Faith, until, turning with the little track about the bushes, she was almost at his feet. He was overwhelmed with sorrow and sympathy, and strong within him rose the manly instinct of protection. He knelt beside her:—

“Faith, dear Faith, is this what you have to suffer? Tell me what has happened. Don’t cry so, dear girl!”

Here now was the last drop of bitterness added to poor Faith’s cup—that Kenneth should enter into this scene of wretchedness!

“Nothing has happened more than always happens!” cried Faith. “Why do you ask me? You can hear for yourself. That is the way my

poor crazy father always goes on, and dear little Letty sits in the house and endures it. But I am a coward and I fly; and then people find me crying, and ask useless questions. I wish you would go away, Mr. Julian. I want to be alone. I can't bear people near me this way. It is not fair of you to come here and — Go away, won't you?" Thus Faith, incoherent.

"No; I cannot go away and leave you feeling like this. I am not people, I am only Kenneth; and I don't see why I should not know of your trouble and help you bear it. Is n't that Scripture, Faith? — 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.' Trouble shared is halved, is it not, dear?"

"No, it is not!" retorted Faith, angry in her mortification, for she was an intensely proud girl. "It is doubled in this case. My Letty and I bear one another's burdens, and that is enough; and we don't want any other person to have anything to do with it or know about it. Will you go away, Mr. Julian? I want to be alone."

"No; I cannot go away just now," said Kenneth calmly. "I think heaven sent me here to help you. If I had not come here in this unexpected way, I might never have known of all you have to

endure, and I feel as if I had a right to know, because I love you, Faith. You must know that I do, and that your sorrow grieves me more than I can tell, and that I would gladly give my life to making you happy and sheltering you from trouble. It is not right, my dear, that your life should be wrecked like this. Do not allow it to be. I shall ask nothing more good and beautiful than to surround you with every comfort and happiness. This has been in my mind for a long while, and I have not dared to say it to you before."

"I wish you had not said it now!" cried the unappeasable Faith. "It is the most impossible thing I ever heard of."

But suddenly to Kenneth it did not seem impossible at all. He had taken a resolution. The ways and means of life came before him like a vision. Why had he thought the question so difficult? It was clear enough what he could do. It was wrong that the crochets of Uncle Doctor should debar him of happiness and should leave this dear Faith to such a doleful lot. Patty could remain at the home and keep house for the Uncle Doctor. What more need Uncle Doctor ask? And he could find some cozy little flat, and

furnish it prettily and simply, and he and Faith and Letty could live there in holy peace, while with the margin allowed him in income by this simple style of living, their father could be taken care of in some retreat, where he could damage neither himself nor any one else. When Uncle Doctor came to know Faith well, he would be more than satisfied with the step his nephew had taken; until then, why, Kenneth could be happy and wait.

All this passed before his mind with the swiftness of a revelation — a vision of a happiness he could not forego.

“Listen,” he said, as Faith, her sobs having ceased, sat now beside him under the thorny plum bush, her hands clasped about her knees and her face turned away, while now and then her bosom heaved with the subsiding tempest of her emotion — “listen to me, dear. I can tell you just how things should be. It is wrong for you and Letty to live here as you do, and endure all these troubles. Your poor father is in constant danger of doing himself or you more serious injury. No one has physical and mental strength to stand such a strain as is here put upon you. I am miserable when I think of it! You must be more

just to yourself and little Letty than to endure this longer. I ask nothing better than to make a home for you and your sister. It will be a plain enough little home, but safe and happy and always improving. Letty shall be as cherished and welcome there as my own sister. Patty will live with our uncle, but she will come and see us often, and will love you so much, Faith. Patty is one of the best girls in the world. Your father can be put in some retreat, where he will be comfortable and well cared for, and have all the books he wants. He will find plenty of other educated gentlemen there. There is, it seems, no limit to that kind of trouble in the world. You do not know, it cannot enter into your mind, how happy you will make me if you will only consent to let me have the care of you all in this way. I am not rich, but I am pretty comfortably off, and all that I have or ever shall have, Faith, is yours, if you will take it."

"I cannot take it," said Faith, turning her sorrowful eyes upon him. "I wish you would not offer it any more or say any more about it. I will not say what I might have done or felt if I had met you when I was situated as other girls are, and free to choose my life as others do. But I

know what is my part now. I must stand by my sister and my father, and I cannot leave Letty and she cannot leave father. I never, never could marry you, or any one, and begin life by having you burdened with the support of my sister and the charge of my father, in the state he is in, at any retreat. When people have that kind of trouble in their family they should bear it themselves and keep to themselves. You may think me too proud. I know I am proud: all the Kemps are, even if in father's sin we have fallen so low. It is a right kind of pride, I think. I know my poor little Letty would feel just as I do. I am sure you must care for me very much, Mr. Julian, or you would not heartily offer to do all this for my family for my sake; but I cannot take it, and the very greatest kindness you can do me is never to mention it again."

"Do not shut me off from hope in that way," said Kenneth; "and remember, if you feel that this plan of mine would be burdensome to you, in a year or so your brother will share it with me. He and I have talked of his plans more than once."

"Do not say any more about it. If Hugh cares for a drunken father, that is part of the burden

God lays upon him, and he cannot neglect it without sin. But no such burden has been laid on you, and I will not lay it on you. This is a foolish world, and before long people would credit you with having your *own* father in a drunkards' retreat, not your father-in-law, and they would be saying: 'No doubt Mr. Julian will go as his father has.' Do you think I could endure that? Some things cannot be explained, and people do well to keep clear of them. I am going back to Letty now. It is wicked to leave her so long, and I beg, I entreat of you, do not come up here any more. I live in terror, thinking you may come, and find things as you have to-day. Will you do me this favor? Say good-by, and say it finally."

She held out her hand. Kenneth, overwhelmed by her resolute dismissal, touched the hand gravely and turned away, while Faith went to her sister.

So miserable was Kenneth that he won his aunt over to his views entirely, and she undertook to go and plead with Faith and expound affairs more definitely than Kenneth could do.

But Faith was inexorable. She would not burden a husband's hands and name with her family sorrow. She and Letty had been called to this path — they would tread it alone.

And yet how often a glimpse of the rest, the freedom, the happiness that might have been, came to her! She loved the good, bright things of life so well! It would be so blessed to be free from disgrace and reproach and fear! Sometimes she was almost tempted to regret her decision, to feel as if she could not endure unto the end. In these hours she fought indeed with dragons, and she conquered them.

CHAPTER XVII.

BY SORROW'S HEARTH.

"Patroclus' death the pretext of these tears,
But each in secret wept her private grief."

ABOUT this time the honest heart of Kiah Kibble ached at seeing the sad faces of Letty and Faith Kemp. All the former sallies of mirth, the reaction into happiness after grief, had passed away, and there were two maidens all forlorn, sure enough. There was always good pretext for sorrow in the behavior of their father; but behind this ostensible cause of trouble was other care. Letty privately felt herself a very helpless, in-the-way little body, with no errand in this world but to burden other people. She knew that Faith was unhappy, and she grieved accordingly.

Faith felt that she had put aside the one great opportunity of happiness that had ever come into her life, and she in fancy saw her future stretching on and on in months of rayless gloom. She did not regret the course that she had taken; she said that no other was open to her; but in taking

that path she had turned her back upon the sun of joy, and cold and long the shadows fell before her as she pursued her way.

Kiah Kibble was looking after his young friends more closely than usual, and he observed this gloom for two weeks; then he considered it time to go forth on a little missionary work to the house on the beach. It was Sabbath afternoon, and Kiah put on his best clothes; then, charging his boy to be scrupulous in refraining from fishing, and bidding Nan by no means read other than religious books while he was gone, Kiah set forth to call upon his tenants. Father was asleep in his room; Letty was in her usual low chair, reading; Faith had taken her Bible out to the sand line, but she was not reading. The book lay on her lap, and she looked out over the sea in a sorrowful dream. Oh, the long, long years of the future! How they seemed to pile up before her, like dark and frowning peaks! Life seemed so strong in her that she felt as if death must lie much farther from her than from other people, and the coming road would be as long as dark.

Kiah Kibble was one of the very few whom Letty had met to whom she ever talked freely. The hearty piety of the old man brought him

near to her. For six years he had been their only friend and helper, here in their exile. When Kiah now began kindly to question concerning the added gloom that seemed to hang over the sisters, it was not long before Letty had told the whole story. It was not only that father was moving on to ruin with accelerated pace, but Letty had found that she did not suffice for comfort or companionship to her sister Faith, and Faith, on behalf of Letty and father, had made a great renunciation and was very sad.

“I know,” said Letty simply, “that it must be a terrible trouble to love any one very much and send that one away forever, as she has done. I felt so wretched when we gave up Hugh, and if I were obliged to part with Faith forever, it would break my heart! So I mourn over Faith, knowing that she is mourning. And that is not all, Mr. Kibble; I think I never felt so troubled about myself before. I have always just taken the fact that I am not like other people, that my face looks old, and that I am deformed and dwarfed — I have taken that as something that I could not help and that I have become used to. But now I feel that trouble all the time; I fret over it. I feel not only helpless, but in the way,

and one of the stumblingblocks before my sister. I am one of the reasons why she cannot be happy. Faith sees that any one whom she married would have to take care of me, and I should be a burden to my brother-in-law, and it is different from what it would be if I looked like other people. If I were gone, Faith could not get along with father, and he would have to be taken care of, and Faith would be free."

"Ay, ay," said Kiah, looking at his gnarled, knotted fingers; "how much better you can plan it than the Lord does! It is a pity, child, but you had had the ordering of your sister's life; you would do much better for her, no matter what it is!"

"O Kiah!" cried Letty.

"That's what it amounts to, child. You had nothing to do with this deformity coming upon you. It's true it was your father's sinful indulgence that caused him to drop you, but many a man not at all in liquor has dropped a child he was tossing about in play; and many a child has caught a bigger fall than you had, and never was hurt a particle. Often when I see the way children fall I think of the verse, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their

hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' For some reason that is all dark now, the Lord permitted this injury to come upon you, which has set you apart and made you different from other people. The darkness, my child, will not always lie upon his designs. It is written, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' I have pasted in a scrapbook, where I keep choice words that come close to my heart, this verse:—

'Pursue thy steady way

Like some fair planet shining through the night,

And though the course through gloom and darkness lay,

Thou shalt at last emerge and tread a path of light.'

When the end comes, Miss Letty, you and all the rest of God's children will be able to say like Jacob, 'The God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.' You see, he did not mean that he had been kept from all evil, but God had made it all turn out for good in the end. You are one of that kind, child, that you care more for others than for yourself, and so you can take some comfort thinking that this misfortune of yours may in some way be your sister's best help toward

heaven. It may do more for her spiritual life than any other thing. You feel as if you'd like her to have a nice home and easy times and all that is good in this world, but the word of God is that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' Life, in God's idea, consists in growing toward eternal glory. I mind that my grandfather, who was a very godly man and a deacon in the church, said once of a man who had had a very great number of troubles and much sickness and suffering, that he had 'been a pack horse to carry the rest of the family toward heaven,' because it was only his afflictions that turned their minds to religion. When my grandfather said that to him one day, the old gentleman looked about at him and said, 'All right, deacon; so they get there, I don't care if it is over my shoulders, for I'm like Paul: I'd be willing to be made a curse for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh.' And so, child, you cheer up; don't go to desponding now about the trouble you've borne bravely for so long. Take the Lord's will concerning you and yours with a cheerful face. The Lord loves singing pilgrims better than weeping ones. 'All things work together for good to them that love

God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' ”

These words gave Letty heart again. She saw her life in a better light, all radiant with the accepted will of God. And then when Kiah found that her heart was lighter he concluded it was time to go and give a little counsel to that other maid sitting musing by the sea. He went and sat down near Faith.

She nodded at him silently.

“And so, Miss Faith, you have made your choice of a hard lot?”

“Did Letty tell you?”

“Yes; what did you do it for?”

“Because I ought. It was the only thing I could do.”

“You don't repent of it then?”

“No. As long as things are as they are it was my only course. Let us not speak of it any more.”

“Yes, that is a good plan; it was done because, on your best judgment, it was right to be done, and so best not speak of it. That is right. But how about thinking of it?”

“One can't help thinking, you know, Kiah.”

“One ought to, if the thinking leads to brooding and depresses the spirits and makes one

unhappy. A sacrifice, Miss Faith, when it is laid on the altar ought to be laid there with a smile. I've got a book at home I like to read sometimes, a history of those old-world countries, Greece and Rome. It has pictures in it, and one of them is of ancient sacrifices; and the sheep and oxen that are brought to the altar are dressed out in ribbons and wreaths of flowers. Those were sacrifices to false gods, and the more is the pity; but still, in the way of doing it, they had the right of it; they made the sacrifice free and joyful. You know, Miss Faith, in the Law, Moses ordered that on some of the sacrifices a handful of incense should be thrown. That is a type of prayer, but also of cheerful prayer, a sort of joy in the giving. It seems to me, if you don't mind my poor way of talking to you, that when we come to a place in life where there are two roads which we *can* take, and only one that we feel that we *ought* to take, then when we turn our feet into that one we should go on cheerful and singing and not looking back. Don't you mind how it says, 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God'? I am not educated as well as you are, Miss Faith, but I am older, and I have gone further in

Christian experience, and I take it it is Christian counsel you need just now."

"I believe I need something," said Faith, looking round at him; "go on, Kiah."

"I don't mean to say you are turning back as regretting that you did it; but you perhaps keep looking back as sort of lamenting, and contrasting what is with what might have been. That is nature, Miss Faith, but it is by no means grace, and it is grace we ought to be all the while stretching up to if we mean to grow up to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. I've been remarking on you for a couple of weeks or more that you have seemed very down-hearted. Now down-heartedness bears heavy on the bodily health. A cheerful spirit is a continual feast, but a wounded spirit who can bear? If you allow yourself to get into gloom and stay there, my girl, you can no more grow well spiritually than a potato vine can grow well in the dark. As long as you are in this world you might as well be making the best of yourself in the way of growing up to glory. If you break yourself down by indulging in sorrow, you won't be as able to endure the lot to which the Lord calls you, and you'll have a discouraged, worn look that

won't be any credit to your Father which is in heaven.

“Once I knew a man, Miss Faith, that became pretty deaf when he was about middle age. Now I don't reckon that any one would prefer to be deaf; it's a trial, sure enough. This man I'm speaking of had a comfortable home, a well-behaved family, enough to live on in comfort; but he took it into his head that he didn't want to be deaf and could n't abide it. ‘It was trouble enough, and too much,’ he said. So instead of counting his blessings he spread them all over with that one trouble of being deaf, and he looked the most woe-begone, mournful, down-at-the-mouth creature ever I set eyes on. I said to him one day, ‘If you think your heavenly Father takes any comfort or satisfaction in a child of your pining quality, you are very much mistaken; you're a disgrace to the Christian family,’ I said, ‘and it kind of disheartens your brethren to look at you. If you can't chirk up on your own account, why don't you do it for the sake of other folks?’

“Now, Miss Faith, I don't mean you look that dismal, or are like to carry on the way that man did. It is not in your nature; but I do

think you are yielding to sad feelings and discouragements and it will be bad for you and hard on your poor little sister. She has heavy burdens of her own, and I observe when you look cheery and talk lively and seem to feel fairly contented, she seems just lifted up into comfort by it. She's one to pine over your troubles more than over her own. Now, miss, let me remind you that the Lord knoweth the way that we take, and he has counted up all our tears and all our trials. The sum appointed is written down from everlasting, and it was written by One who loves us and has our good at heart. Is your father's failing a burden? The Lord knows all about that. He knows just how far he is to go and when he is to stop and what will come after. He knows where help is to come from; he knows whether, by and by, all this worriment will seem like a very short time, and the after good very long and great. You cannot help these troubles that are about you; but you can help giving way to them and being ruined by them. There is always the good word of the Father, if you will listen to it, and there is always his hand held out, if you will take hold of it. Many a little child, Miss Faith, walking in a rough way gets a tumble

because it pulls and jerks free of its father's holding hand."

"I believe you are right about it," said Faith, turning to Kiah, to whose plain discourse she had listened attentively. "I have always said that the best sense and the best courage made the best of the hard places of life, and here I was giving way! I will think more of poor little Letty and less of Faith."

"Do so," said Kiah; "because that will not only be good for you, but it will take that extra sorrow out of *her* face. Then, Miss Faith, if the time comes when she is gone away to the place she seems far more fit for than for this world, you will remember that you always did your part to comfort her."

Faith started. Yes, she must consider Letty! "I have been wrong and selfish after all!" she cried; "and do you know, Kiah, that I have been praising myself as a very heroic and self-sacrificing young person?" she added whimsically.

"No doubt; we all like to do that. Well, I'm glad you don't take my little preachment to you amiss. I meant it well. But I have been up here a long time, and I'm afraid that things at my house may not be going on just right for Sunday

afternoon. I kind of hear it said to me as to David, 'With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?'"

"But he was justified in leaving them, you know, for he was out after that big giant Goliath. You have been up here slaying giants, and you found me and my Letty in the dungeon of Giant Despair and you have given us a key to help us out."

Kiah laughed. "Ay, ay! that's a main good book, that Pilgrim's Progress! I'll go home and read it to my family. I reckon I know how it will be when I get home. If the boy has n't dared to fish, he will have been digging bait or playing ball. Nan will have got tired of her Sunday reading and will be peeping into a novel she's got hold of. The old woman finds Sunday long, and as she dare n't knit or sew she does all the extra dusting and scouring that she can get hold of. Ay, I will go home and read a chapter or two out of the Progress."

As Kiah went up the beach to the path over the dune, he met Ralph Kemp, and completed his missionary enterprise by walking along with him and taking a seat behind a clump of juniper, for a little reasoning with him on his besetting sin.

He risked shortening the reading in Pilgrim's Progress by a few pages, while he tried to turn this sorely wandered father back toward the path of rectitude. He could not take him on such high spiritual grounds as Letty and Faith. Kemp had no spiritual yearnings; but he had some remnants of family feeling and of personal pride when he was sober. He was ready to agree with all that Kibble said to him. Tears of honest sorrow came into his eyes when the old boat-builder pleaded the cause of the daughters. He promised reform: promised it so heartily that Kiah could not but believe in him. Kiah had only known Mr. Kemp for about seven years, and he did not yet understand the futility of promises so fervently spoken.

Therefore, fortunate in the issue of all his benevolent undertakings, Kiah Kibble returned to read the Pilgrim's Progress to his household. Oh, beautiful old book! Oh, book so often blessed to the comfort and maintenance of the Father's chosen! Book product of prison and of bitter spiritual pain and long and weary discipline, how often have those springs rising in the Marah-land of God's servant in Bedford jail made the vineyards of other souls like watered gardens!

Whether we linger in the Interpreter's House, or sit in the Palace Beautiful, or sing with the little shepherd lad in the green Vale of Humiliation, or with rising joy behold Apollyon worsted, or shiver through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or weep in the dungeons of Doubting Castle, or go up the glorious slopes of Beulah Land, or rest upon the Delectable Mountains—the heart is fed “as with marrow and fatness.”

And now, when Kiah and Mr. Kemp were pacing slowly along the dune together, Faith, who had made new resolutions and had found something better to do in life than to dream and regret, ran up to the house to Letty. Self-scorn had helped Faith to put on a brighter bearing and take a more valorous tone than she had used of late.

“Letty!” she cried, “I have been down by the sea learning lessons. They were good ones too, and have brought back my courage. With such a dear little sister as you are why should I not content myself?”

“Has Kiah been telling you what I said?” asked Letty wistfully.

“No, indeed! What did you say?”

“Nothing worth repeating. What was he talking about?”

“About my religious duty ; about serving God willingly and cheerfully, and I mean to do it ! I sha’n’t mope any more. There is nothing to mope about. I am young and healthy, and I know how to make a living. I have a dear little sister, and as for our little home, it is comfortable, and many people would be glad enough of as good a one. I have been counting up my mercies, and I can say, ‘How great is the sum of them !’ Now, Letty, if I cheer up, you will have to, or I shall go to disgracing myself by moping again, and you will be the cause of my downfall. To begin with, I have n’t been making it very pleasant for father lately, I have been so dull and self-absorbed. Let us get supper, just such a supper as we all like. Then after that we will have a good sing ; we will sing all our best hymns. To-morrow I mean to borrow Kiah’s violin and it may amuse father to play on that for us while we work. What does it strike you we should have for supper ? Say something easy now !”

“Welsh rarebit and potato salad,” said Letty laughing.

Thus Faith at Kiah’s suggestion reconstructed her ways.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TOO LATE! TOO LATE!

“For thou art very valiant, but thy will
Is weak and sluggish, and it grieves my heart.”

FAITH KEMP entered upon her rôle of cheerfulness with much vigor. She was a girl of great force of will, and she was the more urged to exercise this regnant power of the soul by seeing how her father had always been lacking in self-government. Having before her a daily spectacle of moral weakness, in one of its most painful exhibitions, she felt animated to rule well her passions and emotions and accustom herself to be dominated by the sense of duty. Therefore she was now all day busy and cheerful, and at night did not permit herself to lie thinking of her troubles or of how much better things might have been, but quietly clasped Letty's hand in hers and commanded sleep, as healthy organizations are able to do.

Letty for some time watched her, to see if her cheerfulness were assumed in public and

if privately she were miserable; but Faith had decided that there should be "no backward thought, and no returning," and presently Letty began to take comfort in her regard. Privately Ralph Kemp questioned his elder daughter as to why Mr. Julian was seen no more. Letty told him the truth.

"It was then on my account?" father questioned.

"Yes, father. He came up here when you were at your very worst, and Faith sent him away forever."

"Then I have ruined Faith's life in one way, just as I ruined yours in another," said her father bitterly.

"Yes, father; but still—you never meant it."

"And what did I mean? Nothing; that is where the trouble lies. My moral nature has been like a bit of thistle down swept about by the strong wind of appetite. Such a man as I am ought never to have any children, Letty."

"Father—did you drink before you were married?"

"Only a little, child."

Letty worked in silence at the train of a peacock.

“The lesson from which is,” continued father, “that women should never marry men who drink any. They never know unto what that taste will grow. ‘Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.’ That was what Tom Wharton held, and he was opposed to our marriage, and that is one of the reasons of his hostility to me. I don’t blame Wharton; I don’t blame any one but myself—and I blame myself for being morally weak. I wish I knew at what point I might have begun the being stronger. Where could a commencement of moral vigor have been made? before I was born?”

“Very likely,” said Letty; “and then, as soon as you were born, your parents might have helped you to understand by their management and training that there was an *ought* and an *ought not*, and that people have to do what is right, whether it is pleasant or no. And so you would have come up with a good habit to the years when you were old enough to know reasons and govern yourself a little.”

“The Whartons,” said father, “were all people with a tremendous sense of moral responsibility and great will power. They were headstrong too, on occasion. I think your mother was that when

she married me. We loved each other, and for the sake of that love she resolved to take a great risk. Now Faith in her will power must be a regular Wharton, for I see she has taken a step that must have cost her much, and she is resolutely cheerful about it. I'm sure I wish she had a father more worthy of her. I'd reform if I could, Letty. Sometimes I think I will, if it kills me. Suppose I do resolve!"

Letty said nothing; what innumerable promises this man had made, and they had all been to his ungovernable appetite as the new ropes on the brawny arms of Israel's giant judge!

"I see you don't believe in it, Letty, and I don't; it is too late! too late!"

Faith had common sense to see that in order to keep up her courage and fulfill all her duty she must maintain her physical strength. Open-air life was absolutely essential to her, and she daily persuaded Letty and her father to spend some time with her out-of-doors. An old sail of *The Goblin* was stretched as an awning against a background of plum bushes, and sometimes they all sat there, and sometimes at the grotto among the rocks. It was a pleasant-looking family party — the handsome Faith, with her lace pillow on her

knee; Letty, throned on cushions, working at some frame filled with gorgeous designs; father busy at a net or a hammock. No one would have thought to see them what a terrible sin blighted all their lives, and from what high and fair estate they had fallen.

One day they were in their grotto when a fisherman came up the beach to dig clams in a tongue of sand that ran out beyond the rocks. He had with him a girl of ten, who sat down by the water's edge and presently began to drone in a loud nasal monotone, which she called singing:

“ Little Sally Sawyer,
Sittin' in a saucer,
Aweepin' an' awailin' for a young man.
Rise, Sally! Rise, Sally!
Wipe the tears from out your eyes, Sally!
Cease weepin', cease wailin'; here's a young man!”

Father had laid aside his netting and was reading and carefully expounding to his daughters the first eclogue of Virgil. The loud twang of the girl broke up the reading. One, two, three times came this same dismal ditty. Faith rose and peeped through the crevices of rock to investigate. The child sat on the beach, her faded pink sunbonnet hanging back from her tousled head

and freckled face ; her hands were clasped about her knees ; her brown, bare feet and ankles appeared from below her brown calico dress, and she rocked to and fro, keeping a sort of time to her chant, as with eyes vacantly set toward the sea, and hanging under lip and chin, she loudly drawled : —

“ Little Sally Sawyer,
Sittin' in a saucer ! ”

“ It is impossible to read when such a din is kept up,” said father impatiently. “ Send her away, Faith.”

“ I can't,” said Faith ; “ the state owns the beach, and she has as much right there as we have. But certainly this Sally she is singing about is a very idiotic young person. What is she ‘ weepin' an' wailin' for a young man' for? Could n't she find something better to employ her time? Was all the work done at her house? Were there no dishes to wash or stockings to darn or loaves to bake? ”

“ Little Sally Sawyer,
Sittin' in a saucer,”

intoned the girl shrilly.

“ Sally must have been an aggravating character

to have about," said Faith. "Why did she disturb the community with her woes? And the young man who is finally brought in to stop the general deluge must have been a person of poor taste to be suited with" —

"Little Sally Sawyer,"

twanged the girl.

"It will drive me crazy," said Mr. Kemp. "I shall go away."

"Wait a minute," said Faith, "and I will stop it. Now you and Letty look and listen."

She picked up Kiah Kibble's violin and stepped out.

"Little girl! Who was this Sally?"

The child checked herself, with her mouth stretched for a long-drawn — "R-r-i-s-e, Sally."

"What was Sally crying about?" demanded Faith with interest.

The child had evidently never applied any thought to her ditty.

"Was the young man her brother?" urged Faith.

The child stared.

"Was he *dead*?"

"Dunno."

“Why did she spend her time in that foolish way? Was all the work done? Why didn't she go and weed the garden? I think Sally set a very bad example weepin' an' wailin' for a young man. There are precious few young men worth turning one's self into a fountain for. If I were you, I'd sing about a girl that had some grit. Sally, in my opinion, was simply absurd and disgraceful. Now let me teach you how to sing that. Jump up there and stand before me, and we'll have a singing school. Come now, hear me!”

She played a few notes.

“Little Sally Sawyer
Broke a cup and saucer,
Weeping and wailing over her dish-pan.
Rise, Sally! Rise, Sally!
Polish up your eyes, Sally!
And learn to do your dishes just as nicely as you can.”

Faith, standing poised, her violin on her left shoulder, her pretty, round, dimpled chin resting on the dark old wood, her eyes flashing with mirth, the light flaming across her golden hair, beating time on the sand with her foot as she sang her version of “Sally Sawyer” to the amazed little girl, who with hands clasped behind her stood as if she saw a vision, made indeed a beautiful picture.



“COME, NOW — HEAR ME!” — P. 296.

“Is n’t Faith splendid!” cried Letty in wild admiration.

“She is fit for the very first position in any society,” said her father. “What grace! what quick adaptability! And to think she is set here in this dull, dreary place to wear out her life over a lace frame — by my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault!” And father smote his breast in penitential mood.

But the penitential mood is a painful one, and father did not relish this indulgence in it. He tried to lessen the poignancy of reflections upon himself.

“I am sure Faith is not unhappy or grieving; she could not put all that fun on in a minute. She is contented with us, and didn’t care for Mr. Julian. I rather wonder that she did not; he is a fine fellow, but Faith evidently took a dislike to him and showed it very plainly.”

The clam digger had now finished his work and was coming along the beach. Ralph Kemp went out to ask him whether there were many clams to be found. He thought he would get some for supper; he had a weakness for clam fritters.

Faith went back to Letty. As she sat down and took up her work she said: “I am truly

thankful that the Lord thought it worth while to send me a message by Kiah Kibble, so that I am delivered from making a 'Sally Sawyer' of myself. A pretty creature I would have looked pining and fretting, instead of doing what work is given me to do! That child's droning lay showed me just what a dunce I might have been."

"But, Faith, father and I were just saying that you seemed made to *shine*. You seem just the one to be put in some high place and show every one how to be bright and beautiful, and here you are in a little cabin on the beach earning bread at a lace frame!"

"'Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should praise Him in its song
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word
And sing his glory wrong,'"

said Faith calmly. "I ought to be just where God has placed me and nowhere else."

"Faith," said Letty softly, "you grow. It is well to grow, for only when we grow do we really know that we live. A year ago I think that you could not have felt or spoken just in that way."

"I have had more experiences," said Faith; "and I think, Letty, that experiences are some-

thing to be thankful for, whether they are exactly pleasant or not. And it would be a shame if I could not show a little patience and self-sacrifice, after having before me during all my life such a sweet example of both as you have set me. What is any little trouble I may have had to your trouble, my dear Letty?"

Letty made no reply; but she considered that no doubt Kiah was right, and that by ways which seemed to her hard and which she would gladly have spared the beloved sister, the Lord who loved her better still had led her into a loftier spiritual life. "To grow in grace," said Letty to herself — "this is our errand here below, and it is worth much to learn to do it well."

And so daily these sisters grew dearer to each other and came into closer and more tender confidence, and those weeks were to Faith's thoughts in after life as a sacred time, a sweet and blessed memory. She learned at last to forget the shadows that father cast into that autumn, and recall only the hours she and her little gentle elder sister spent in sweet sympathy. The father was often away, they did not know where. He now went so often that they could not follow and rescue him as once they had tried to do. No

work would have been done, and no bread earned, and "Kemp's daughters," "the dwarf girl," and "the handsome one" were becoming more conspicuous than they could endure to be.

One day they were thus alone. It was the first week in October, and the weather was particularly warm and calm. The sisters were at work with the door and window open, when a shadow fell across the threshold and a parasol tapped on the doorpost. A slender dark girl stood there, with smiling eyes like some Faith knew quite well — a girl of about eighteen.

"Are you Faith and Letty Kemp?" said the stranger. "May I come in? I am Patty — Patty Julian. Do you know me?"

"Yes," said Faith, rising and holding out her hand, and led the guest up to Letty. Letty had kept her seat. It had always been very distressing to her to rise for the first time, and show her dwarfed stature to strangers. She was at less disadvantage seated in her chair.

Patty bent and kissed Letty, and Faith at once loved her for that; but the slender, dark Patty seemed a little in awe of the tall, erect beauty, four years her senior. Faith gave her a chair near Letty.

“I am only here for a day or two,” said Patty shyly. “I have so often heard of this beach, but I have never been able to come and see for myself until now. This fall I am more free. I do not have to go to school any more. I graduated in June. But you must not think that means knowing very much. They did not teach us such wonders of Latin as Kenneth says you know, and I am afraid we were dreadfully slack in English literature. Uncle Doctor would not send me to a college or boarding school, where they would be real particular with us; he had some crochet about my health. I had a cold once, when I was about six, and ever since then he has had notions about my health. Don’t you think that was a very high price to pay for a cold—to have to be coddled forever after?”

“Perhaps it was very wise to coddle you,” smiled Faith.

“Pshaw! I make sure that it was just because Uncle Doctor cannot be happy without some one to coddle! He is made so! Do you know, I see your brother Hugh very often.”

“Oh, do you?” cried Letty, considering that here was a girl to be envied.

“Yes; he comes to our house frequently, and

your Uncle Tom comes too, now, sometimes; and he and Uncle Doctor are getting to be great friends. I like your Uncle Tom very much. He and I get on so nicely; and he is always telling me how nice your brother is. He is so proud of him!"

Faith saw a vivid pink blush drifting over Patty's cheek when she spoke of Hugh.

"Your brother talks to me of you. He was so glad that I was to come up here to see you. He wished it would be well to write. He says to tell you that in a year from now you will all be living together, and will never be parted in this way again. He makes such plans, but he never speaks of them to his Uncle Tom. He says when the time comes near, then he will tell him just what he means to do."

"You make us very happy, speaking to us of our brother," said Faith.

"My brother also speaks to me of you," said Patty with a keen glance at Faith, who was very busy with an intricate corner of her lace work, "and Aunt Parvin does also. I feel as if I know you."

"Thank you. How is my little cavalier, Richard?"

“Jolly as ever, and never tired of talking of his ‘mermaid.’ I used to be his favorite, because I can play ball and whistle; but he says you know how to do many more things than I do.”

“I hope you will not therefore be jealous and dislike me?”

“No. I will not be jealous of you *about anybody*,” replied Patty. “I thought if — if next year you came to live with your brother, I should like to know you a little now; and then we could meet like old friends; and so I ventured to come up here to-day.”

“I am very glad you came up,” said Faith; “but I do not think we shall go to live in the city with Hugh. I think we shall stay here. There are reasons why we should, and here we get on very well. We are too busy to be lonesome, and we have each other.”

“But we are very glad to know you, and to be friends with you, if you will let us,” said Letty, who thought Faith too cold.

Patty chatted for some time, and made herself very agreeable. Finally she rose to go; then, in a hesitating way, she said to Faith: “My brother came here with me; he is at the hotel.”

A deep red spot burned on Faith’s cheek.

“May he not come up here and call?” urged Patty.

“No,” said Faith gently but firmly. “No, Patty.”

“Well, thank you for calling me Patty. I hope it shows that you do not dislike me.”

“I like you very much,” smiled Faith, “and you were very good to come and call. But you must know — as I do — that it is better that — all should be — as I said it must. I know what is right.”

Patty pressed her hand and turned away, but she knelt down by Letty’s chair and put her arm about her shoulders.

“Dear Letty, I want you to love me and be my friend, and write to me; will you, dear? You have made no promise not to write to *me*, and you have no scruples about anybody else, as Faith has. And I want you to let me write to you, and you will answer me every week, will you not? It will make us both happier. Say that you will.”

“Yes, indeed I will, if you wish,” said Letty.

And then Patty went away, leaving Faith standing abstracted.

“Was I wrong, Faith?” asked Letty. “Should not I have promised to write?”

“It was well enough, dear, if you chose; but don't you see that was what she came for? Hugh and Kenneth have sent her. They want to hear from us, and as Hugh is pledged not to write, and nothing would induce me to, they will get on just as well if you do it. But I am sure she liked you really, for yourself, not merely because they sent her.”

“But, after all, is it not right that they should hear we are alive and well — our own brother, you know?” said Letty.

CHAPTER XIX.

HE FINDS LIFE IMPOSSIBLE.

“He that hath found some fledged bird’s nest may know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair wood or dell it sings in now,
That is to him unknown.”

THE love of strong drink might, like the love of money, be called “the root of all evil.” As there is no commandment in the decalogue which has not been broken at the instance of the love of money, so there is none which has not been broken at the instigation of strong drink. Mr. Kemp, in discoursing to Kenneth Julian concerning this appetite, had held that often the brightest minds and the most genial dispositions were the victims of this fatal thirst. Of the truth of this statement he himself was a conspicuous example.

Drinking is by no means the only sin rife in this fallen world, nor are drunkards the only sinners. A great deal of sin hides itself under good clothes, a correct demeanor, and much self-appro-

bation, and goes about its business, and regularly attends church, enjoying the highest credit in the community. The Scripture, which does not fail to survey the entire field of moral action, tells us that "some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." Ralph Kemp and Uncle Tom Wharton were types of these two classes of sinners.

There is also another thing to be observed concerning sinners and sinning: when the child of God cherishes evil in his heart, scarcely realizing how evil it is, and is yet desirous of being taught by the Spirit of God and walking in the paths of righteousness, then the time comes when the evil which he nourishes is brought clearly before him, so that like Job he abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes. Thus it was with Uncle Tom Wharton, who, though high-tempered and high-headed, was nevertheless sincerely anxious to serve his divine Master.

The preaching of the Word is perhaps the means most frequently used by God for awakening convictions of sin and true repentance, especially in Christians who attend upon the means of grace. They go to the Father's house and there they are enlightened concerning the Father's will.

Thus it was with Uncle Tom Wharton. He took his accustomed place in the house of God, and there he was first reproved of sin and then shown the way of righteousness. He went to church one Sunday in November, and was disappointed to find that his own pastor was absent and that the pulpit was filled by an old minister whom he considered neither very learned nor very eloquent. This aged messenger, however, had a great depth of experience on which Mr. Wharton had not reckoned.

Among Uncle Tom's good qualities was a very carefully cultivated habit of paying strict attention when he was in church; he never let his mind wander away from the subject in hand. "If it is worth while to go to church," quoth Uncle Tom, "it is worth while to get all the instruction you can while you are there. Two or three hours a week are little enough to spend in receiving spiritual teaching."

This habit of exact, undivided attention in church is just as capable of being cultivated as any other habit. Uncle Tom had found it so, and he rather prided himself upon being able to bring home nearly all the sermon with him, while an especially good point about his listening was

that he did not divide the dispensed doctrines and reproofs among his neighbors and consider that nothing belonged to himself.

Uncle Tom Wharton boasted that he was not a man given to changeableness, and he thought it rather to his credit to hold anger and hostility year after year against the ill-deserving. "If their wrongdoing is the same," he said, "why should not my feeling against them be the same?" Chief among all his cherished resentments was that which had been stirred by his brother-in-law, Ralph Kemp. Possibly his pride in his own morality, his scorn of Ralph's weakness, his bitterness against Ralph the sinner, a bitterness which extended even to his two nieces, because they had been guilty of cleaving to their erring father, were as evil in the sight of God as the devious ways of Ralph himself. The difference lay in that when Uncle Tom was shown his sin he hated it and forsook it; but Ralph hugged his darling sin the closer.

When Mr. Wharton heard the chapter for the morning reading announced, he opened his Bible to follow it, and it seemed to him he had never heard any Scripture so forcefully read. It was the story of a certain servant, who owed his Lord ten

thousand talents, which were freely forgiven him; but he went out and took a fellow servant by the throat, and would not forgive him, but went and cast him into prison for a debt of a hundred pence. "*And his lord was wroth.*" Then when the text was announced, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Mr. Wharton sighed to himself that the text was trite and the theme was one that had been worn out with much handling; but he settled himself to listen, because he was now an old man and had an unalterable habit of hearing. Whereupon this aged pastor, who knew many of the remotest windings of the hearts of men, and their most secret sins, which sometimes sat in the inner chambers of the soul, almost in the guise of angels, began to show, as Mr. Wharton had never realized it, the vast enormity of cherished anger, the danger of bidding the soul go up on the judgment seat to condemn our brethren, and the impossibility of loving and serving God while the human brother is unforgiven and unhelped. These ways of hardness are not the ways of our Father in heaven, or of the Christ our Elder Brother. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

In a few moments Tom Wharton found that the preacher was drawing the pattern of his wrath-nourishing soul, and had a message from God to him. "Thou art the man" seemed to be the refrain of every sentence. How heartily had he hated the sinner as well as loathed the sin! How little quarter had he been willing to give to his erring neighbor! God had borne long with Ralph Kemp, but he had not been willing to bear with him one hour. He had bidden his stumbling brother to rise up and walk firmly; but had he given him his hand to help him up? Had he been right in refusing to help Ralph's children, except on the condition that they should sever all connection with their father? Who had given him authority to dispense with the filial tie, and set Hugh entirely apart from his father? Had not the daughters of Ralph a hard enough lot in life, but he must make it harder by denying them any comfort from their brother? Who made Ralph Kemp and Tom Wharton so largely to differ? What private and personal envies and jealousies and bickerings lay at the root of all this lofty exhibition of moral pride? Uncle Tom Wharton began to feel as self-convicted as did David when Nathan the prophet went to him with a story about a lamb.

Home from church went Uncle Tom in a very silent mood, and after dinner took down his Bible and Concordance to investigate for himself this law of forgiveness and compassion. He had had new light that day on some parts of the Scripture, and now he was searching out the meaning of Holy Writ as with a candle, line by line. He was a slow thinker, slow to make up his mind, slow to act, waiting to be thoroughly convinced before he spoke or changed his ground. Moreover he was now an old man and here was the overturning of the notions of his lifetime.

A week had passed away, and it was Sabbath afternoon again, and Uncle Tom and his nephew were in the library reading. Uncle Tom had faced the varied facts in his case ; he realized how much he had always loved Hugh, who had his mother's voice and face and ways ; he had always wanted the boy for his, and had not wanted to share him with his father, and he had been glad of a pretext for dividing him from his family and parting him from other love and making him dependent for love, friendship, comfort on himself alone. In all the seven years of their joint lives, Uncle Tom had never once mentioned to Hugh his father or his sisters. He had wanted the boy to

forget them! Had he so forgotten? Uncle Tom, with this new awakening of his nature, was dimly conscious that it would be a bad omen for Hugh's character if he had forgotten these ties of family and kindred; and if he now found Hugh callous toward his nearest blood, he would mourn over the work of his own hands! Uncle Tom shrank from opening the subject lest he should find Hugh lacking, and should feel himself chargeable with the lack!

However, he was a blunt man, and what he had resolved to say he said baldly:—

“Hugh!” in an imperative voice, “how long since you have thought of your father and sisters?”

Hugh dropped his book astonished. “I think of them every day.”

“Next September you will be twenty-one, Hugh. Have you thought what you wished to do—about them—then?”

“I have made up my mind, Uncle Tom, as to what is the only thing I can do.”

“Well,” with impatience, “what is that?”

“My poor sisters, one a delicate, deformed girl, the other only two years older than I am, have had for seven years to bear all the sorrow, respon-

sibility, care of my unfortunate father. As soon as I am my own man, I shall assume that care and responsibility and give my sisters the relief that they have every right to claim."

"What do you mean by 'being your own man'?"

"I am bound to you, Uncle Tom, by a promise made by my sister Letty and myself to cut myself off from my family until I am twenty-one."

"And you think that a very wicked and burdensome promise that I exacted from you?"

"I think that you exacted it for my good. I believe you felt that only by my being so severed from my father could I grow up in moral straightness, and free from his sin. I don't blame you one bit, uncle. You have been all and more to me than you promised. I owe you no end of gratitude, but I lose sight of the gratitude in giving you a son's love, and that seldom thinks specifically of gratitude. I am sure my sister Letty thought that this plan was right, if it was hard. But I do think, Uncle Tom, that if it had ended in blotting out of my mind my family and my duty to them, if I had grown indifferent to the needs of my father and the love of my sisters, it would have been very heart-hardening to me, and put me out of the line of blessing."

“That’s what I think,” said Uncle Tom; “but it seems you have remembered?”

“I loved them very much, especially my sisters. We had been everything to each other, and had had few other friends. I had promised my mother always to love and help the girls. We all promised each other before we parted that we would think of each other every day, and that the years should make no difference in our love. I have always prayed for them, and I am sure they have for me, and we have had our hearts held close together by being held in God’s hand.”

“And what do you mean to do for them?”

“I mean to put father in the safety of some retreat or asylum, where he cannot harm himself or other people. It is idle to hope that he will reform. It is too late. He is one of that unhappy class that must be cut off from the community, for the public good, and I can only take care that he shall have all the comfort and kind treatment that I am able to secure for him. When he is provided for I shall make a home for my two sisters. We can live together, in some little flat here, very cheaply. And if I cannot earn enough to maintain us all, the girls can earn what is lacking for themselves just as they do now.”

“And you are going to leave me out in the cold?”

“No, Uncle Tom; we will visit you, and see you and love you just as much as you will let us. But the girls I must take care of; they are young, desolate girls, and you are a strong, rich, well-connected man.”

“See here, Hugh,” quoth Uncle Tom, “for the past week the Lord has been running a subsoil plow through my heart, and tearing it up at a great rate. I didn’t know that I had such treasures of darkness in it!” And he proceeded to give Hugh an account of the moral revolution that had been worked in him. “I was wrong,” he said; “and when Tom Wharton sees that he is wrong, the first thing that he does is to try to get right. The plan you have made is manly and sensible, if your sisters will fall in with it. You don’t know what they are like if you have not heard from them for seven years, and that is all my fault.”

“I have not heard from them, but I have heard of them, and know all about them, and have for more than a year, through Kenneth Julian; and Patty Julian went up to the beach where they live, and saw them and told me about them; and

last Christmas the Julians and I sent them a big box of presents — poor dear lonesome girls!”

“Seems to me I have been keeping myself out of some good times!” cried Uncle Tom. “And little Patty went to see them, eh? You chose a good messenger, Hugh. Little Patty! She is a girl worth knowing. When I look about on all I have been gathering to make this home pleasant, I sometimes think I’d like nothing better than to see little Patty here in possession, to hold it after I am gone! How does that strike you, Hugh?”

“It strikes me that I am not twenty-one, and am already provided with a family of three to take care of, and that I must stick closely to that for some years to come. But I did not send Patty to the beach. It was Kenneth who did it. Kenneth wants Faith to marry him, and she won’t, on account of father and Letty.”

“Well, well, well!” said Uncle Tom.

“I’m glad, uncle, that you are not going to be angry with me, because I must take my rightful place and do my duty to my family.”

“No. I won’t stand in the way of your getting God’s blessing on right doing. I’ll help you on. Why wait a year? Why leave those girls for another miserable winter up there on the beach?”

Tell me all that you have found out about them. Letty was the best little soul, and Faith was a real beauty, and bright as a new dollar. I wanted to have them come here at first, but I would not go so far as to put your father where he would be safe. Besides, he would not have gone, and he was then master of his own actions, and not so wrecked as he is now."

"Don't blame yourself any more," said Hugh, and gave in careful detail all that he had gathered from the Julians about his family; and yet Hugh was far from knowing the worst.

"Now see here," said Uncle Tom, "you go up there this very week, and see what arrangements you can make. If your father will go to some retreat quietly, well and good. If not, you can get an order from the court for his restraint. The only fair thing to do, for you or the girls or the community at large, is to keep him out of harm's way. I think that all habitual drunkards should be treated as dangerous lunatics, and locked up. When your father is in safe-keeping, bring the girls here. We will be all one family, just as I wanted to have it when your mother died. A pretty notion it would be for you and the girls to be living in your little flat, and the girls slaving

away with their needles while I have more money than I can use! What do you take me for?"

"For a genuine good uncle, though sometimes a little crusty," said Hugh, laying his hand on his uncle's shoulder. "And your plan is a much nicer one than mine, Uncle Tom. You don't know how I hated to think of leaving you and this home and all the pleasant things I have been used to for seven years."

Now on this very Sabbath afternoon when Hugh and his Uncle Tom were planning in this way, Kenneth and his sister Patty were sitting together, and Patty said that it was already growing chilly; the days were short, and soon the hunter's moon would have waned away and the glory of the Indian Summer would have departed and winter with its gray skies and whistling winds would be upon the land.

Then Kenneth began to lament the lot of Faith and Letty on the lonely beach in that little desolate house, with their father subject to violent outbreaks, and no friend near them but Kiah Kibble the boatbuilder. Kenneth pictured a thousand terrible things that might befall them, and he felt sure that, pursued by the demons of these fears, he should not be able to eat or to sleep all winter.

For want of a better scapegoat whereon to lay his troubles, he charged all to Uncle Doctor. He did not stop to consider that Uncle Doctor's opposition to Faith would have been futile if Faith had been willing to agree to Kenneth's plans for her and for himself. Moreover, Faith knew nothing of Uncle Doctor's opinions.

Patty, being a girl of common sense, expounded this to Kenneth. At all events, Kenneth said, it was impossible that matters should stand in this way. Faith ought to hear reason, for the benefit of Letty if not for her own. He should not let the question drop. If Faith were safe and comfortable, he would not be so miserable just because he was not the one to afford the safety and comfort. Then he inveighed strongly against Uncle Tom Wharton and Hugh for neglect and hard-heartedness. A pretty thing for them to be rolling in wealth, and the sisters in a cabin fighting for their bread! He knew what he would do: he would go up to the beach on Wednesday, and he would not come away until he had brought Faith to hear reason, and not risk her life and Letty's in this fashion. Then, having greatly excited Patty with a view of Hugh's iniquities, Kenneth after tea set off to the Seaman's Bethel, in which he had an evening class.

While Kenneth was going to the Bethel, Hugh was hastening to Uncle Doctor's to tell Patty the good news about Uncle Tom's change of opinion.

Patty was a vehement little body, and when she heard that Hugh had called for her to go to church, instead of going for her hat she stirred her thoughts to wrath, and marched as an army with banners to greet her guest in the library. The scarlet flush on her cheeks was as pennants displayed, the flash of her level glances was as serried bayonets; the clear high tones of her voice rang defiance, and she met Hugh with a proclamation of war:—

“Hugh Kemp! I've been thinking of your sisters all the afternoon! And I think you and Mr. Tom Wharton are acting most selfishly and barbarously to them! The idea of leaving them to freeze up there on that wretched beach, while you have all the good things of life here in the city!”

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST CRUISE OF THE GOBLIN.

“Wouldst thou a mortal man from death withdraw
Long since by fate decreed?”

WHEN Patty so vigorously upbraided Hugh on account of his sisters, Hugh felt that this championship was admirable. At the same time it suggested to him what a fine thing it would be not to tell Patty what Uncle Tom had decreed, but to bring the girls to the city, and then give Patty a charming surprise. As he hoped that all his plans would be accomplished within a week, he could the more easily wait. Meantime, not to fall in her estimation any lower than he seemed unfortunately to be already, he told her that she was quite right, and he had made up his mind to do differently soon.

Thus, as Hugh kept his purposes a secret for the sake of a surprise, he failed to learn that Kenneth had resolved to go to the beach on Wednesday. If they had known of each other's plans, the two young men might have traveled in com-

pany. As it was, there being two rival roads, it happened that they went by different ways when Wednesday came.

On this same Sabbath when Hugh and Kenneth were occupying themselves with the sisters' fortunes, the day being fair, Faith persuaded her father to go with her to church. When the sermon was nearly over, he rose and quietly went out. Faith waited trembling for his return at the close of the service. He did not come back, and when the congregation was dismissed she went down the street by the saloons. They seemed to be complying with the law for Sunday closing: the shutters were up, and all was still. She could see nothing of her father. After wandering forlornly about the streets for a time, she concluded to go homeward, hoping to meet Kiah Kibble, who went to a church some little way on the farther side of the town. She finally saw the boat-builder, who searched about back streets and by-ways for nearly an hour, but discovered no trace of Kemp. He returned to Faith, who was waiting, seated on the steps of an empty house.

"It is no use waiting for him, Miss Faith," he said; "he is well hidden. You might as well go home to your sister. There's only One can look

after the devious steps of your father. The poor man is constantly more bent on having his own way and getting out of your care. To my view there is only one thing to be done, miss: if you cannot put up with his being commonly drunk on the streets, or imprisoned for misdemeanors, we must show that he is dangerous, as I think he is, when he is at large, and have him shut up."

"But where? We have no money to pay for him at a retreat or at a lunatic asylum; it costs a deal, and Letty and I are just barely able to get along, working all that we can."

"The county house has a ward for such; he could be got in there," suggested Kibble. "I can see to it."

"Do you mean as a pauper in the poorhouse?" cried Faith, flushing crimson. "My father! educated as he is — and" —

"I know, child, it is piteous hard; but what then? It is better than being out on the streets, unable to look after himself. He is in danger of doing something terrible, or of meeting some fatal accident. And then, you and your sister are never at rest or able to take any comfort: it is too hard; it is wearing you out."

"We cannot do that! it is too dreadful," said

Faith. "We must bear our burden one year, or at least ten months more, and then, with our brother to help us, we may be able to put our father where he will be safe and not too much disgraced."

The memory of Faith's sad eyes and discouraged face so haunted Kiah that in the afternoon he went over to see the sisters. Their father was still absent. Both the girls had been crying.

"It is harder," said Kiah to Letty, "harder sometimes to leave those we love in God's hands than to leave ourselves there. We feel truly that God is good and wise and will do the best, and if the choice were given us, we would not want to take matters out of his hands; and yet it is hard to rest satisfied. It takes a deal of Christian spirit to say, as David did: 'Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child.' Just giving up and waiting is a heap harder than the bravest doing; I'll allow that. Keep up heart; 'The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion.'"

"I suppose it is just a piece of foolishness," said Faith, "but I feel a sort of terror over me, as if something dreadful were going to happen. I feel shivery and frightened."

“The weather is changing and the winter is coming on,” said Kiah. “We’re going to have storms, and you are always one main fond of good weather and warm bright skies. You dread the winter, and I don’t know as any one could blame you. But you know, Miss Faith, that the evil of things is always more in the dreading than in the things when they come. The winter will go by, day by day, as beads slip off from a string, and it will soon be gone, though it looks so long in the expectation. I reckon that’s one reason why God don’t let us foresee the future—because we’d suffer twice over, once in the expecting and once in the enduring, and the suffering in expecting would be double the hardest.”

“I don’t feel as Faith does,” said Letty, leaning back quietly. “I cried about father just now, with Faith; we cried for company’s sake I think; but somehow I feel as if everything were now going to be just right. I have had such pleasant dreams lately, all about my mother. We seem to be together and satisfied and happy. I think much more about my mother than about Hugh, though I suppose in ten months we shall see Hugh. And while I am at my work, I feel content and as if our troubles were already rolled away like a thick

cloud, and I sing to myself. And it seems as if heaven were near, so very near, just a step, into the next room or so. I don't know what I'm happy about; I'm just happy."

"I don't think you have very much to be happy over," said Faith.

"Oh, yes, I have. I have *you*, for instance. And I enjoy my letters from Patty so much. I am going to write to her to-morrow. And it is such a comfort that our brother is good, and thinks of us. Suppose he had gone wrong? And I am happy when I read the Bible, it seems to mean so very much to me; and my heart is full of hymns that sing in it as a flock of little birds in a garden; and I am happy when I think that I need not worry or trouble myself about anything, but that all I have to do is to fall back on God and trust him. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.' 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.'"

Faith drew nearer and nearer to Letty and clasped her arms about her as if she would hold her fast. She seemed somehow as if slipping away from her into a diviner air.

"You are too happy," she whispered; "there

are some cords drawing you that do not draw me. You must not forsake me. You will not leave me, my own good little Letty?"

"That is as God wills," smiled Letty. "It seems to me as if I feel stronger than ever, and am to be here a long, long while, till I am very old, Faith. How oddly I will look, so little, and yet so old and gray!"

Faith kissed her passionately.

"Don't take things so, Miss Faith," said Kiah, — "as if only sorrow and evil were coming. Why can't you feel as Miss Letty does — as if good was even now on its way to you?"

He rose as he spoke, for the afternoon was closing, and as he opened the door he added: —

"And here is some good at once; here comes the father up the beach, and he is walking very straight."

"You go meet him, Letty," said Faith, "and I'll hurry and get him some supper."

Mr. Kemp had been drinking, but not deeply. He brought home with him, hidden in his bosom, a flask of brandy, of which he said nothing. After supper he said he was going to bed.

"You are not sleepy yet," said Faith. "When you have gone to bed leave your door open, and Letty and I will sing to you."

They sang a long time, and finally sleep and silence settled down over the little house on the beach.

Monday arrived with forebodings of a change of weather. Puffs of cold wind came across the marshes, where now gleaners were at work picking the last of the cranberries. The seabirds flew low, screaming, and among the distant rocks the red, hairy seals began to sport and dive, returned from northern migrations. Faith heard them calling and bleating like calves: to her their voices told of winter. The sky was very blue, but fringed and flecked with small white clouds. The sea, also, was intensely blue, and here and there dancing in the distance were curls of foam.

“It will brew in this way four or five days,” said Faith, “and then a big storm will break. We have provisions enough and work enough, but the wood is nearly gone. We must see that father gets some and cuts it and brings it in.”

Father did not object to this work; he addressed himself to it with feverish energy. A terrible struggle was going on in the father's soul. He was making his last fight against his besetting sin. Once more the shame of his state, the fear of the future, compassion for his

daughters had stirred him, and he longed, with what little strength of purpose was left him, to break the chains of appetite. There was the bottle of brandy hidden in his room. Should he drink or should he not drink? The day before, drinking stealthily with others in the cellar of a saloon, supposably closed for Sunday, the horror of his condition had stared him in the face, and he had resolved to go home. But, ever infirm of purpose, he felt as if he could not face what might be unappeasable pangs of thirst, and he took with him a quart of brandy. The walk in the fresh air, the hot supper, the attentions of his daughters, sleep calming his nerves, had given him a little strength, and he refrained from helping himself from the bottle. He wondered if, like Tennyson's cobbler, he could set his enemy before him in the strong sunlight, and defy it, and never drink again. Probably not; and if the bottle came forth, doubtless Faith would confiscate it. Meanwhile work, hard work, provoking a hearty appetite and heavy sleep, would tide him over a little period of abstinence.

Thus Monday and Tuesday passed and Wednesday came, gray and cold and windy. The sea was a dull leaden color now, and rolled and broke in

foam-crested waves. The skies stooped close over the sea, dull leaden as the waters. The fishing fleet remained at anchor in the farther cove. It was useless to go to the fishing grounds to-day. The Goblin, fastened to a ring in a rock, tossed about and threatened to pound roughly on the reef if the off-shore wind changed. Faith thought that later in the day she and father would draw the Goblin up on the sand.

After dinner, Faith found that she must go to a farmhouse about a mile off for meat, eggs, and butter. If her father were to be kept quiet, they must give him fairly good meals. It was idle to send him for the provisions; it might put it in his mind to go to town. But as for putting it in his mind, it was in his mind all the time. Faith asked him to do some mending and banking up about the kitchen to prepare it for bad weather, and then saying, "Good-by, father; take good care of Letty!" she set off.

A few minutes after, Kemp, as if seized and dragged by a fiend against which he had no power, rushed into his room and drank part of the brandy. Then he cursed his compliance and worked madly for a time. After an hour he felt as if that bottle were dangled just before his

eyes, tempting him to drink. It was idle to fight. He ran into his room and seized the flask; then a horror of his state overwhelmed him. He flung the bottle over upon the bed, crying, "I can not! I will not!"

Letty heard him. She ran to him holding out her hands. "Father! father! what is it?"

He looked at her wildly, and running past her hurried toward the water. Poor Letty went after him as fast as she could. He ran straight to the point of rocks, got on his knees, and began to untie the Goblin.

When Letty reached him he was already about to step into the boat. "Father!" she cried, "what are you going to do! You must not go in the Goblin! Even the big boats are not out to-day. The wind is getting stronger. Father! don't go."

"Let me alone, Letty! I am going out to my lobster pots. To-morrow it will be so stormy I cannot bring them in. There will be no more lobsters. I must get the pots."

"No, no, father! let them be. It is not worth risking so much for! They will drift in if they break loose. Don't go!"

But he felt that he must have fierce exertion and frantic excitement if he were to battle

with his fiend. Go he would; he was already putting in place his oarlocks.

Letty saw his unsteady hands and wild eyes. The brandy he had recently taken was telling on him. If he went out in this state, he would never get back—he would lose command of his boat. If she went, Letty thought she could quiet him with her words, tell him what to do when his own reason proved treacherous; she could steer the boat, and, if need be, she could row pretty well, for Letty's arms were strong.

“If you go, I will go with you, father!” she exclaimed; and as her father was pushing off she threw herself into the boat.

“Stop! go back! You cannot come!” roared her father.

“I must, if you do. But come home, father; tie the Goblin up; let neither of us go.”

The wind was driving them out from shore, but the tide was coming in, and just here the sea was calmer among the rocks, and the Goblin felt the influence of the tide more than the wind.

Father found the boat setting in toward the shore. Then the spirit of perversity, which was in him when he had been drinking, took the

reins. He gave a strong stroke with the oars and sent the boat flying seaward.

“I *will* go! There! Come, if you must!”

Letty clambered to the stern of the boat and took the tiller ropes in hand. She had wrapped a shawl over her head and shoulders and she pinned it fast.

Father was in his flannel shirt sleeves; he had cast off his coat. He was hatless and his hair blew wildly backward, as facing Letty he drove the Goblin along the water.

This was what Faith saw when she reached the house and from the height of the dune beheld the Goblin leaping along the waves, Letty in the stern, the ends of her red shawl fluttering about her, father, in his blue shirt, bent to the oars. There was a rift in the sullen cloud-canopy overhead, and the broader light fell over the boat and its hapless crew. To what destruction were they going? Faith shrieked after them, “Come back! come back!” and dashed along the beach and out upon the rocks. It was idle to call. Father rowed right on furiously, and Letty, whose back was toward Faith, never looked around. Faith ran up and down the beach in terror. On, on, on! The Goblin was but a little speck. It paused. In

the line of light, surrounded by those white curls of cruel foam, Faith saw the red and the blue and knew that her father was drawing up his lobster pots. But now the wind that had been shifting and veering all day swept around and united with the tide, driving waves and boat landward, and Faith found the storm rising more fiercely with rain upon its wings. Straining her strong young eyes along that gray fury of the elements, it seemed to her that her father had lost strength or will or knowledge. Something was wrong. The Goblin varied in its track and staggered under the force of the waves and was not keeping its due course toward shore, but driving where the treacherous currents bore upon hidden rocks. And now it was sure that this boat and her freight of two hung trembling on the verge of disaster, and death was imminent.

Faith was alone on the beach; no fisher was in sight; no one heard her cries of despair or noticed her arms flung up wildly as she ran up and down the strip of sand, heedless that her hat and shawl were torn from her by the wind, and that her long golden hair, blown from its braids and coils, lay tossing over her shoulders. If she ran toward the boathouse, that would take her out

of sight of the Goblin, and if near the shore it overset, and the tide brought father and Letty in, no one would be there to help them. Besides, perhaps Kiah was not at the boathouse, and it was half a mile away. Faith ran to the house, threw wood on the fire and put on a kettle of water; she made a fire on the hearth of the front room, always keeping her watch upon the sea. She laid out blankets on the floor and then darted back to the beach. So near! so near! she could see them well. Father had ceased to row and his head was bowed on his knees. Letty seemed still to hold the tiller ropes, but her face was upraised to the sky. They could not hear Faith's cries of terror; the wind carried them far inland, and the ears of the two in the boat were stunned by the tumult of the sea.

The Goblin hung on the crest of a wave which broke upon a great rock, and the frail boat struck broadside and the water rushed through the shattered planks. The Goblin had made its last cruise, and the two, father and Letty, went down under the whirling foam. Faith saw it and instinctively rushed into the water, as if she would get to them and rescue them. She did not realize what she was doing until the water swirled about

her waist and she felt the instinct of self-preservation numbly stirring within her and dragging her back, while she realized the futility of any effort of hers. No strong swimmer even could live in that dash of surge. So with the waves breaking in foam about her knees she stood crying to the waters to give her back her own, and held out her helpless arms.

And now the tide and the wind united to restore what wind and tide had taken. Swept in with the débris torn from the sea bottom, hurled shoreward with wreckage of sand and weed and shell and bits of the Goblin, came Letty and her father. Faith with streaming eyes kept pace along the shore with the drifting of her treasure on the sea, and at last, after half an hour that seemed a lifetime, she rushed again into the water and seized Letty's garment's hem and drew her to her and carried her to the bed of weed along the beach — Letty, white and still, with face as serenely calm in the peace of death as if those mad waves had been a cradle rocking her to sleep, timed to the cadence of a mother's song. Faith laid her down; she knew it was too late to try to call life back. Letty was elsewhere, lost in the light of God. Faith knelt by her little

elder sister with agony too deep for tears or sobs.

And now the waters were bringing a darker burden and Faith went down into them again and reached her father, and with the output of all her young strength drew him also upon the sand and composed his limbs and laid his hands across his breast and wrung the water from his hair and wiped his face and closed his eyes. "O father! father!" Then, dazed by her strange fate, the girl knelt down between her dead, and she saw that the features of her father changed and changed and settled into calm, and took the fashion that she remembered when she was a little child. So, overwhelmed by what had come upon her, under the lowering sky beside the stormy sea she knelt between her dead holding a hand of each.

Then along the beach, from where the stage had left them, came two who had met, bound on a similar errand — Hugh and Kenneth. And when a few paces had brought them to the crest of the dune, and Kenneth pointed and said, "They live there," they saw upon the sand two figures outstretched and still — and one who knelt between.

There lay father. For him all striving and failing were ended, his cause gone before a higher court, where cases are not tried on human testimony and of whose verdicts we do not know. There was Letty, entered into peace—one of the maiden martyrs of the nineteenth century, faithful to the end to him who at the close as at the opening of her life had been her destroyer. But no; this was not destroying; it was the best possible end, and by the sea gate she had entered into heaven.

“In this night of death I challenge the promise of thy word:
Let me see that great salvation of which mine ears have heard,
Let me pass to thee accepted, through the grace of Christ my Lord.”

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